GHITZA

OTHER
ROMANCES OF
GYPSY BLOOD

by

KONRAD BERCOVICI

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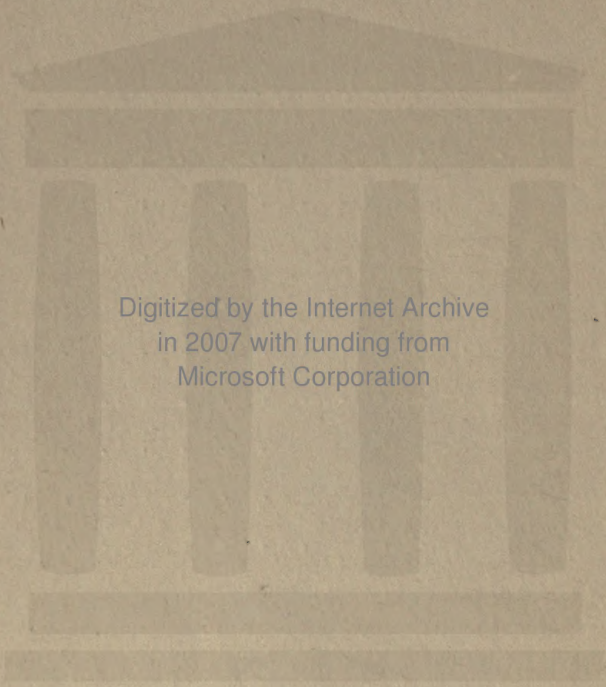

GHITZA

THAT winter had been a very severe one in Rumania. The Danube froze solid a week before Christmas and remained tight for five months. It was as if the blue waters were suddenly turned into steel. From across the river, from the Dobrudja, on sleds pulled by long-horned oxen, the Tartars brought barrels of frozen honey, quarters of killed lambs, poultry and game, and returned heavily laden with bags of flour and rolls of sole leather. The whole day long the crack of whips and the curses of the drivers rent the icy atmosphere. Whatever their destination, the carters were in a hurry to reach human habitation before nightfall—before the dreaded time when packs of wolves came out to prey for food.

In cold, clear nights, when even the wind was frozen still, the lugubrious howling of the wolves permitted no sleep. The indoor people spent the night praying for the lives and souls of the travelers.

All through the winter there was not one morning but some man or animal was found torn or eaten in our neighborhood. The people

of the village at first built fires on the shores to scare the beasts away, but they had to give it up because the thatched roofs of the huts in the village were set on fire on windy nights by flying sparks. The cold cowed the fiercest dogs. The wolves, crazed by hunger, grew more daring from day to day. They showed their heads even in daylight.

When Baba Hana, the old gypsy fortune-teller, ran into the schoolhouse one morning and cried, "Wolf, wolf in the yard," the teacher was inclined to attribute her cry to a long drink the night before. But that very night Stan, the horseshoer, who had returned late from the inn and had evidently not closed the door as he entered the smithy, was eaten up by the beasts. And the smithy stood in the center of the village! A stone's throw from the inn, and the thatch-roofed school, and the red painted church! He must have put up a hard fight, Stan. Three huge dark brown beasts, as big as yearling cows, were found brained. The body of big Stan had disappeared in the stomachs of the rest of the pack. The high leather boots and the hand that still gripped the handle of the sledge-hammer were the only remains of the man. There was no blood, either. It had been lapped dry. That stirred the village. Not even enough to bury him —and he had been a good Christian! But the priest ordered that the slight remains of Stan

be buried, Christian-like. The empty coffin was brought to the church and all the rites were carried out as if the body of Stan were there rather than in the stomachs of wild beasts.

But after Stan's death the weather began to clear as if it had been God's will that such a price be paid for His clemency. The cold diminished daily and in a few days reports were brought from everywhere on the shore that the bridge of ice was giving way. Two weeks before Easter Sunday it was warm enough to give the cows an airing. The air cleared and the rays of the sun warmed man and beast. Traffic on the frozen river had ceased.

Suddenly one morning a whip cracked, and from the bushes on the opposite shore of the Danube there appeared, following one another, six tent wagons, such as are used by traveling gypsies, each wagon drawn by four horses harnessed side by side.

The people on our side of the Danube called to warn the travelers that the ice was not thick enough to hold. In a few minutes the whole village was near the river, yelling and cursing. But after they realized that the intention was to cross the Danube at any cost, the people settled down to watch what was going to happen. In front of the first wagon walked a tall, gray-bearded man trying the solidity of the ice with a heavy stick. Flanking the last wagon, in open

line, walked the male population of the tribe. Behind them came the women and children. No one said a word. The eyes of the whole village were on the travelers, for every one felt that they were tempting Providence. Yet each one knew that Murdo, the chief of the tribe, who was well known to all, in fact to the whole Dobrudja, would not take such risks with his people without good reason.

They had crossed to the middle of the frozen river in steady fashion, when Murdo shouted one word and the feet of every man and beast stopped short. The crossing of the river had been planned to the slightest detail. The people on the shore were excited. The women began to cry and the children to yell. They were driven inland by the men, who remained to watch what was going on. No assistance was possible.

The tall chief of the gypsies walked to the left and chose another path on the ice. The movement continued. Slowly, slowly, in silence the gypsies approached the shore. Again they halted. Murdo was probing the ice with his stick. We could see that the feet of the horses were wrapped in bags, and instead of being shod each hoof was in a cushion made of straw. As Murdo felt his way, a noise at first as of the tearing of paper, but more distinct with every moment, came from somewhere in the distance.

"Whoa, whoa, Murdo, the ice is breaking!" every one began to shout excitedly. The noise grew louder and louder as it approached. One could hear it coming steadily and gauge how much nearer it was. The ice was splitting lengthwise in numberless sheets which broke up in smaller parts and submerged gayly in the water, rising afterwards and climbing one on top of the other, as in a merry embrace.

"Whoa, whoa, Murdo . . ." but there was no time to give warning. With one gesture Murdo had given his orders. The wagons spread as for a frontal attack; the men seized the children and with the women at their heels they ran as fast as their legs could take them. On the shore every one fell on his knees in prayer. The strongest men closed their eyes, too horrified to watch the outcome. The noise of the cracking of the ice increased. A loud report, as of a dozen cannon, and the Danube was a river again—and all, all the gypsies had saved themselves.

It was a gay afternoon that afternoon, and a gay night also for the whole village. It drank the inn out of everything. The gypsies had a royal welcome. To all questions of why he had dared Providence, Murdo answered, "There was no food for my people and horses. The Tartars have none to sell."

Murdo and his tribe became the guests of the village. His people were all lean. The men

could hardly carry themselves on their legs. Everybody had something to nurse. The village doctor amputated toes and fingers; several women had to be treated for gangrene. The children of the tribe were the only ones that had not suffered much. It was Murdo's rule: "Children first, horses next." The animals were stabled and taken charge of by the peasants. The gypsies went to live in the huts of the people in order to warm themselves back to life. Father liked Murdo, and so the old chief came to live with us. The nights were long. After supper we all sat in a semicircle around the large fireplace in which a big log of seasoned oak was always burning.

I had received some books from a friend of the family who lived in the capital of the country, Bucharest. Among them was Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship,* translated into French. I was reading it when Murdo approached the table and said, "What a small Bible my son is reading."

"It is not a Bible, it is a book of stories, Murdo."

"Stories! Well, that's another thing."

He looked over my shoulder into the book. As I turned the page he asked:

"Is everything written in a book? I mean, is it written what the hero said and what she answered and how they said it? Is it written all about him and the villain? I mean, are there

signs, letters for everything; for laughter, cries, love gestures? Tell me."

I explained as best I could and he marveled. I had to give an example, so I read a full page from the story-book.

"And is all that written in the book, my son? It is better than I thought possible, but not so good as when one tells a story. . . . It is like cloth woven by a machine, nice and straight, but it is not like the kind our women weave on the loom—but it is good; it is better than I thought possible. What are the stories in the book you are reading? Of love or of sorrow?"

"Of neither, Murdo. Only about all the great heroes that have lived in this world of cowards."

"About every one of them?" he asked again. "That's good. It is good to tell the stories of the heroes."

He returned to the fireplace to light his pipe; then he came to me again.

"If it is written in this book about all the great heroes, then there must also be the record of Ghitza—the great Ghitza, our hero. The greatest that ever lived. See, son, what is there said about him?"

I turned the pages one by one to the end of the book and then reported, "Nothing, Murdo. Not even his name is mentioned."

"Then this book is not a good book. The man who wrote it did not know every hero . . . be-

cause not Alexander of Macedon and not even Napoleon was greater than Ghitza. . . ."

I sat near him at the fireplace and watched his wrinkled face while Murdo told me the story of Ghitza as it should be written in the book of heroes where the first place should be given to the greatest of them all. . . .

As to the birth of people, I, Murdo, the chief of the gypsy tribe which was ruled by the forefathers of my great-grandfather (who each ruled close to a hundred years); as to the birth of people, I, Murdo, can say this: That the seed of an oak gives birth to an oak, and that of a pine to a pine. No matter where the seed be carried by the winds, if it is the seed of an oak, an oak will grow; if it is the seed of a pine, a pine. So though it never was known who was the father of Ghitza, we knew him through his son. Ghitza's mother died because she bore him, the son of a white man—she, daughter of the chief of our tribe. It was Lupu's rule to punish those who bore a child begotten from outside the tribe. But the child was so charming that he was brought up in the tent of one of our people. When Ghitza was ten years old, he worked alongside the men; and there was none better to try a horse before a customer than Ghitza. The oldest and slowest horse gathered all the strength it had and galloped and ran when it felt the bare boy on its

back. Old mares frisked about like yearlings when he approached to mount them.

In his fifteenth summer he was a man, tall, broad, straight and lissom as a locust tree. His face was like rich milk and his eyes as black as the night. When he laughed or sang—and he laughed and sang all the time—his mouth was like a rose in the morning, when the dew-drops hang on its outer petals. And he was strong and good. If it happened that a heavy cart was stuck in the mud of the road and the oxen could not budge it, Ghitza would crawl under the cart, get on all fours, and lift the cart clear of the mud. Never giving time to the driver to thank him, his work done, he walked quickly away, whistling a song through a trembling leaf between his lips. And he was loved by everybody; and the women died just for the looks of him. The whole tribe became younger and happier because of Ghitza. We traveled very much those days. The Dobrudja belonged yet to the Turks and was inhabited mostly by Tartars. The villages were far apart and very small, so we could not stay long in any place.

When Ghitza was twenty, our tribe, which was then ruled by my mighty grandfather, Lupu, happened to winter near Cerna Voda, a village on the other side of the Danube. We sold many horses to the peasants that winter. They had had a fine year. So our people had to be about

the inn a good deal. Ghitza, who was one of the best traders, was at the inn the whole day. He knew every one. He knew the major and his wife and the two daughters and chummed with his son. And they all loved Ghitza, because he was so strong, so beautiful, and so wise. They never called him *tzigan* because he was fairer than they were. And there was quite a friendship between him and Maria, the smith's daughter. She was glad to talk to him and to listen to his stories when he came to the smithy. She helped her father in his work. She blew the bellows and prepared the shoes for the anvil. Her hair was as red as the fire and her arms round and strong. She was a sweet maid to speak to, and even the old priest liked to pinch her arm when she kissed his hand.

Then came spring and the first Sunday dance in front of the inn. The innkeeper had brought a special band of musicians. They were seated on a large table between two trees, and all around them the village maidens and the young men, locked arm in arm in one long chain of youth, danced the *Hora,* turning round and round.

Ghitza had been away to town, trading. When he came to the inn, the dance was already on. He was dressed in his best, wearing his new broad, red silken belt with his snow-white pantaloons and new footgear with silver bells on the ankles and tips. His shirt was white and thin

as air. On it the deftest fingers of our tribe had embroidered figures and flowers. On his head Ghitza wore a high black cap made of finest Astrakhan fur. And he wore his large ear-rings of white gold.

Ghitza watched the dance for a while. Maria's right arm was locked with the arm of the smith's helper, and her left with the powerful arm of the mayor's son. Twice the long chain of dancing youths had gone around, and twice Ghitza had seen her neck and bare arms, and his blood boiled. When she passed him the third time, he jumped in, broke the hold between Maria and the smith's helper, and locked his arm in hers.

Death could not have stopped the dance more suddenly. The musicians stopped playing. The feet stopped dancing. The arms freed themselves and hung limply.

The smith's helper faced Ghitza with his arm uplifted.

"You cursed *tzigan!* You low-born gypsy! How dare you break into our dance? Our dance!" Other voices said the same.

Everybody expected blows, then knives and blood. But Ghitza just laughed aloud and they were all calmed. He pinned the smith's helper's arm and laughed. Then he spoke to the people as follows:

"You can see on my face that I am fairer than any of you. I love Maria, but I will not re-

nounce the people I am with. I love them. The smith's helper knows that I could kill him with one blow. But I shall not do it. I could fight a dozen of you together. You know I can. But I shall not do it. Instead I shall outdance all of you. Dance each man and woman of the village until she or he falls tired on the ground. And if I do this I am as you are, and Maria marries me without word of shame from you."

And as he finished speaking he grasped the smith's helper around the waist and called to the musicians:

"Play, play!"

For a full hour he danced around and around with the man while the village watched them and called to the white man to hold out. But the smith's helper was no match for Ghitza. He dragged his feet and fell. Ghitza, still fresh and vigorous, grasped another man and called to the musicians to play an even faster dance than before. When that one had fallen exhausted to the ground, Ghitza took on a third and a fourth. Then he began to dance with the maidens. The fiddler's first string broke and the guitar player's fingers were numb. The sun went to rest behind the mountains and the moon rose in the sky to watch over her little children, the stars.

But Ghitza was still dancing. There was no trace of fatigue on his face and no sign of weariness in his steps. The more he danced, the

fresher he became. When he had danced half of the village tired, and they were all lying on the ground, drinking wine from earthen urns to refresh themselves, the last string of the fiddle snapped and the musician reeled from his chair. Only the flute and the guitar kept on.

"Play on, play on, you children of sweet angels, and I shall give to each of you a young lamb in the morning." Ghitza urged them. But soon the breath of the flutist gave way. His lips swelled and blood spurted from his nose. The guitar player's fingers were so numb he could no longer move them. Then some of the people beat the rhythm of the dance with their open palms. Ghitza was still dancing on. They broke all the glasses of the inn and all the bottles beating time to his dance.

The night wore away. The cock crew. Early dogs arose and the sun woke and started to climb from behind the eastern range of mountains. Ghitza laughed aloud as he saw all the dancers lying on the ground. Even Maria was asleep near her mother. He entered the inn and woke the innkeeper, who had fallen asleep behind the counter.

"Whoa, whoa, you old swindler! Wake up! Day is come and I am thirsty."

After a long drink, he went to his tent to play with the dogs, as he did early every morning.

A little later, toward noon, he walked over to

the smith's shop, shook hands with Maria's father and kissed the girl on the mouth even as the helper looked on.

"She shall be your wife, son," the smith said. "She will be waiting for you when your tribe comes to winter here. And no man shall ever say my daughter married an unworthy one."

The fame of our tribe spread rapidly. The tale of Ghitza's feat spread among all the villages and our tribe was respected everywhere. People no longer insulted us, and many another of our tribe now danced on Sundays at the inn —yea, our girls and our boys danced with the other people of the villages. Our trade doubled and tripled. We bartered more horses in a month than we had at other times in a year. Ghitza's word was law everywhere. He was so strong his honesty was not doubted. And he was honest. An honest horse-trader!

He traveled far and wide. But if Cerna Voda was within a day's distance, Ghitza was sure to be there on Sunday to see Maria.

To brighten such days, wrestling matches were arranged and bets were made as to how long the strongest of them could stay with Ghitza. And every time Ghitza threw the other man. Once in the vise of his two arms, a man went down like a log.

And so it lasted the whole summer. But in whatever village our tribe happened to be, the

women were running after the boy. Lupu, the chief of the tribe, warned him; told him that life is like a burning candle and that one must not burn it at both ends at the same time. But Ghitza only laughed and made merry.

"Lupu, old chief, didst thou not once say that I was an oak? Why dost thou speak of candles now?"

And he carried on as before. And ever so good, and ever so merry, and ever such a good trader.

Our tribe returned to Cerna Voda early that fall. We had many horses, and we felt that Cerna was the best place for them. Most of them were of the little Tartar kind, so we thought it well for them to winter in the Danube's valley.

Every Sunday, at the inn, there were wrestling matches. Young men, the strongest, came from far-away villages. And they all, each one of them, hit the ground when Ghitza let go his vise.

One Sunday, when the leaves had fallen from the trees and the harvest was in, there came a Tartar horse-trading tribe to Cerna Voda.

And in their midst they had a big, strong man. Lupu, our chief, met their chief at the inn. They talked and drank and praised each their horses and men. Thus it happened that the Tartar chief spoke about his strong man. The peasants

crowded nearer to hear the Tartar's story. Then they talked of Ghitza and his strength. The Tartar chief did not believe them.

"I bet three of my best horses that my man can down him," the Tartar chief called.

"I take the bet against a hundred ducats in gold," the innkeeper answered.

"It's a bet," the Tartar said.

"Any more horses to bet?" others called out.

The Tartar paled, but he was a proud chief and soon all his horses and all his ducats were pledged in bets to the peasants. That whole day and the rest of the week to Sunday, nothing else was spoken about. The people of our tribe pledged everything they possessed. The women gave even their ear-rings. The Tartars were rich and proud and took every bet that was offered. The match was to be on Sunday afternoon in front of the inn. Ghitza was not in the village at all the whole week. He was in Constantza, on the shores of the Black Sea, finishing some trade. When he arrived home on Sunday morning he found the people of the village, our people, the Tartars, and a hundred carriages that had brought people from the surrounding villages camped in front of the inn. He jumped down from his horse and looked about wondering from where and why so many people at once! The men and the women were in their best clothes and the horses all decorated as for a fair.

The people gave him a rousing welcome. Lupu called Ghitza aside and told him why the people had gathered. Ghitza was taken aback, but he laughed instantly and slapped the chief on the shoulders.

"It will be as you know, and the Tartars shall depart poor and dishonored, while we will remain the kings of the horse trade in the Dobrudja, honored and beloved by all."

Oak that he was! Thus he spoke, and he had not even seen the other man, the man he was to wrestle. He only knew he had to maintain the honor of his tribe. At the appointed hour he came to the inn. The whole tribe was loitering around. He had stripped to the waist. He was good to look at. On the ground were bundles of rich skins near rolls of cloth that our men and women had bet against the Tartars. Heaps of gold, rings, watches, ear-rings, and ducats were spread on the tables. Tartar horses and oxen of our men and the people of the village were trooped together, the necks tied to one long rope held on one side by one of our men or a villager and at the other end by a Tartar boy. If Ghitza were thrown, our man had just to let his end of the rope go and all belonged to the other one. The smithy had pledged all he had, even his daughter, to the winner; and many another daughter, too, was pledged.

Ghitza looked about and saw what was at

stake: the wealth and honor of his tribe and the wealth and honor of the village and the surrounding villages.

Then the Tartar came. He was tall and square. His trunk rested on short, stocky legs, and his face was black, ugly, and pock-marked. All shouting ceased. The men formed a wide ring around the two wrestlers. It was so quiet one could hear the slightest noise. Then the mayor spoke to the Tartars and pointed to the Danube; the inn was right on its shore.

"If your man is thrown, this very night you leave our shore for the other side."

Ghitza kissed Maria and Lupu, the chief. Then the fight began.

A mighty man was Ghitza and powerful were his arms and legs. But it was seen from the very first grip that he had burned the candle at both ends at the same time. He had wasted himself in carouses. The two men closed one another in their vises and each tried to crush the other's ribs. Ghitza broke the Tartar's hold and got a grip on his head and twisted it with all his might. But the neck of the devil was of steel. It did not yield. Maria began to call to her lover:

"Twist his neck, Ghitza. My father has pledged me to him if he wins." And many another girl begged Ghitza to save her from marrying a black devil.

The Tartars, from the other side, kept giving

advice to their man. Everybody shrieked like mad, and even the dogs howled. From Ghitza's body the sweat flowed as freely as a river. But the Tartar's neck yielded not and his feet were like pillars of steel embedded in rocks.

"Don't let his head go, don't let him go," our people cried, when it was plain that all strength had gone out of his arms. Achmed's pear-shaped head slipped from between his arms as the Tartar wound his legs about Ghitza's body and began to crush him. Ghitza held on with all his strength. His face was blue-black. His nose bled, and from his mouth he spat blood. Our people cried and begged him to hold on. The eyes of the Tartars shot fire, their white teeth showed from under their thick lips and they called on Achmed to crush the Ghiaour. Oh! it seemed that all was lost. All our wealth, the honor and respect Ghitza had won for us, the village's wealth, and all. And all the maidens were to be taken away as slaves to the Tartars. One man said aloud so that Ghitza should hear:

"There will not be a pair of oxen in the whole village to plow with; not a horse to harrow with, and our maidens are pledged to the black sons of the devil."

Ghitza was being downed. But, wait . . . what happened! With the last of his strength he broke the hold. A shout rose to rend the skies. Bewildered, Achmed lay stupefied and

looked on. Tottering on his feet in three jumps Ghitza was on the high point of the shore—a splash—and there was no more Ghitza. He was swallowed by the Danube. No Tartar had downed him!

And so our people had back their wealth, and the people of the village theirs. No honor was lost and the maidens remained in the village—only Maria did not. She followed her lover even as the people looked on. No one even attempted to stop her. It was her right. Where was she to find one such as he? She, too, was from the seed of an oak.

"And now, son, I ask thee—if the book before thee speaks of all the great heroes, why is it that Ghitza has not been given the place of honor?"

The log was burning in the fireplace, but I said good night to Murdo. I wanted to dream of the mighty Ghitza and his Maria. And ever since I have been dreaming of . . . her.

THE LAW OF THE LAWLESS

THE tent wagons of Murdo's gypsy tribe rolled slowly in single file along the narrow dirt-road leading from Chilia, a village on one of the arteries through which the Danube empties its blue waters into the ocean, to Tulcea, one of the main Rumanian ports on the Black Sea.

For more than three months the gypsies had not been allowed to stop anywhere for a longer time than from sundown to sunrise. No sooner would they come into a village than the authorities would arrive to warn the chief that from on high, from the chief of police, it had been ordered that no gypsies were to be allowed to camp there. And when Murdo dared to ask the reason for such harshness, the *staroste,* the mayor, usually shrugged his shoulders and remarked that orders were orders and required no explanations. Only in Chilia, the *staroste,* an old friend of Murdo, confidentially told the gypsy that it was because the government wanted everybody to have a residence. Such was the law.

"The law says that there be no more gypsies, Murdo. And the law must be obeyed," the old *staroste* said.

Murdo showed the waters of the Danube to the villager as he said: "Can the law order that this water should not flow into the sea? Can it make the Danube farm-land?"

"It could not, Murdo. But the government could dam the river," the *staroste* replied with pride in the strength of his government.

"*Staroste,* erelong the river would dig its way into the sea if its own law be to flow into the sea. I, as the chief, give the law to my people, but never a law ordering the river to flow other than in its course. To rule, say I, Murdo, is to smooth the flow of life, not to dam it. Our ways are different from yours. All the rivers do not flow into the sea at the same place. Four of our horses died on the road from fatigue because of this law. Two of my men are ill.

"Look, *staroste,* at the children, at the women, the dogs. They are tired. It will take a week's work to repair our wagons. Not a wheel that turns as it ought. Most of the axles are bent out of shape. And it is getting cold, *staroste.* There is snow on the mountains. We will meet wolves."

But orders were orders. The old *staroste* could not go against them, and the gypsy tribe, huddled in the crippled tent wagons drawn by fagged-out lean horses and followed by foot-weary dogs, snaked its way to Tulcea, where Murdo, now that he had learned the reason of

the persecution, intended to claim residence because he was born there.

It took the gypsies a month to reach the port on the Black Sea. On the road from Chilia two more horses dropped in the traces. One of the men died and Murdo's own wife was buried behind an oak only a few hours before haven had been reached. The burial took place at night. Early before the following sunrise the soil around the grave was evened up. The few shovelfuls of earth which had been displaced to make room for a human body were thrown to the wind. The gypsies avoided dealings with the law. Murdo's wife was buried as she had lived: on the road. What had the law to do with that!

When Murdo's tribe had finally reached Tulcea the first fleecy snow had fallen. Because the chief of the gypsies claimed to have been born in that town, and until he could prove it through witnesses, Murdo's tribe was allowed to make winter-quarters behind the town, close to the forest.

The first few days the whole tribe lived in the roadhouse. The horses, twenty in all, needed special care and doctoring. The women and children required warmth, food, and clothing. As for the men, they were so engrossed with all these arrangements and so warmed by the new

wine they drank at the inn, they had forgotten that they were tired.

On Monday, after the first Sunday in Tulcea, Murdo ordered his men to prepare camp for winter quarters. The wheels of the wagons were buried in the ground to the axle, and fastened to stakes with ropes. Then several shacks were put up; one for the smithy and the wheelwright of the tribe; one for the common kitchen; and one very long one in which to stable the horses. At the end of the fourth day the winter quarters were in shape and the horses, women, dogs, and children were brought over from the Chan, the roadhouse, to the tent-wagons and the shacks near the forest.

Murdo, away most of the time, had ordered all these things to be done in his absence. He was too busy proving his right to residenceship to be with his people. He could depend on them. For thirty years he had been their ruler. His father and his grandfather, the mighty Lupu, had each ruled the same tribe. Ruled and ruler knew one another. There was strict discipline in some matters. No harshness. Murdo was too strong to be harsh. He was too much of a born ruler to squander his authority on matters not of the first importance. Tall, broad, straight, with a long white beard and a gray mane of hair that reached over his shoulders, Murdo was everywhere a distinguished man. When a stran-

ger needed word with the chief, he had but to see Murdo to know that he and none other was the ruler. At sixty Murdo's black eyes had lost none of their brilliancy, his strong mouth none of its firmness; his arms, long, brown, and long-muscled, still retained their steel; and he moved with a litheness unexcelled by the fleetest youngster of the tribe. He talked very little; mostly in parables and allegories; but what he said carried weight. His round, full voice breathed authority and inspired confidence. What Murdo said was law. No man of his own tribe dared to contradict him. And the gypsies wondered when other authorities opposed their chief's wishes! How dared they! He was Murdo, the son of Stan. The grandson of Lupu, Lupu, the wolf.

No sooner had Murdo's tribe settled for the winter than other gypsies arrived in Tulcea, and were permitted to quarter near the forest for the winter. The different chiefs met in Murdo's tent and agreed to hold their men in check. There were hard times ahead, Murdo explained. The law was against them everywhere. They had met better luck in Tulcea for a while, but if the men should fight or take what was not theirs, he doubted not but that they would be ordered to leave instantly. Let them avoid the wine-houses until things quieted, that was the best policy. In the spring they could

again see what was best for them. It was so agreed. There was very little trade to be picked up. A horse here and there. An ox, a cow, a few pigs, nothing more. The whole day the men busied themselves around their horses and wagons. The women cooked and mended and washed. The children kept themselves near the tents and around the shacks, and helped to blow the bellows and shoe the horses. But the evenings were gay. The older men played cards in one or the other of the barns, which the breath of horses kept warm, while the young people, boys and girls, danced and sang to the music of the violin and the three-stringed *cobza,* the guitar of the *tzigans.*

Among the girls there was one Lina. She was the daughter of Stancu, the chief of a tribe. There were many who were more beautiful than she, with longer eyelashes, longer hair, fuller throat, and even greater shapeliness. Yet Lina was the one most courted, the one most sought after. There was something about her which attracted the young men to her. She had the *Vino incoa,* the "Come-here" about her, and all the youngsters, pleading and promising, followed her wherever she went.

As Christmas approached there were a dozen aspirants; almost all the marriageable youth of the gypsies camped there. She had allowed each of them to think that he might be the chosen

one, so that at every dance the other girls were left alone to themselves, while the young men waited for Lina's favor.

If it happened that one of "her" boys danced with another girl, Lina would only look at him from the corner of her eye, and he would know that he had lost caste with her. The older women laughed heartily at Lina's cleverness, and enjoyed the spectacle of so many men on one string, but the older men were worried, because they feared bloodshed. At another time it would not have mattered much. It was customary under such circumstances for the youths to fight it out amongst themselves. The woman was the spoils of war. Only the circumstances were totally different now. A fight would certainly be calamity.

Among Lina's suitors was Mincu, a man of Murdo's tribe. Murdo liked Mincu. He was very handy with tools and could be depended on when the tribe was in need of clever work. In Murdo's absence, Mincu, though hardly over twenty, was looked upon as the guide of the tribe. The chief occasionally took counsel with him. Nicolai, Murdo's own son, was too much a dreamer.

For Christmas Eve, the gypsies, four tribes, two hundred souls in all, had arranged to have their meal together. The largest barn was fitted out with large white pine tables, the walls deco-

rated with flowers and rugs of all kinds, and from the ceiling hung colored lanterns. The stalls of the horses were transformed into booths for the children. Each tribe had contributed a roasted pig, a bag of flour, sugar, spices, and a barrel of wine. There was plenty to eat and a good deal to drink; soft, sweet wine for the women and children and stronger drinks for the men. Drink to warm the heart, to fire the blood. It was better that the men spend that evening together in the camp than in the roadhouse. Each chief was carving the meat for his own people, and the women were filling the glasses of the men, teasing them, saying pretty things as they did so. When the first hunger had been stilled and the fiddlers were ready to play, Murdo saw how all the young men clustered about Lina. Much wine had already been consumed. Murdo was afraid lest the young men of the other tribes should get beyond the control of their chiefs, as they consumed more wine, and start to fight. Yet he could not tell the others not to drink; they were not his men, and to order only his men would have been unjust. His men were as good as the others, if not better. Yet there was fight in the air. Murdo scented and feared the outburst of superfluous energy. It needed some outlet in another direction; there must be a diversion. Suddenly Murdo got up

from the table and walked up to where Lina stood, surrounded by the young gypsies.

"Silence," his voice boomed.

Pieces of meat, wine-glasses, remained suspended in the air. All movement was arrested by Murdo's voice.

"I shall help Lina to-night choose from amongst these youths, and thus give to the other girls their chance. The best man wins. Wrestling is the game. No knives. No blows. And no wine shall be drunk until the end, when we will drink to the lucky one."

Lina did not look very pleased. She enjoyed the envy and the hatred of the other girls more than the love-making of any man; but her own father, Stancu, the chief, was the first to accept this proposal with joy. Murdo was wise. The wisest of them all, Stancu said to himself. He, too, had scented fight in the air. It were better to turn it all into orderly wrestling, with no knives, no blows, and check the trouble for good. It was time for Lina to stop playing with the hearts of men and the hopes of the other girls.

The tables were cleared and a spacious ring was roped off at one end of the barn. The four chiefs constituted themselves judges. By the time everything was ready for the contest there were only four young men ready to fight for the woman. And amongst them was Mincu, Murdo's man. The eight or nine others had

withdrawn amongst the spectators and were already trying to renew half-broken friendships with other girls.

Murdo announced the rules of the match. The last one on his feet was to be the winner. Once a man's shoulders were pinned to the ground he was eliminated from the contest. The four men were paired off by drawing lots. The first two to lock arms were Mincu and a youth named Yorga. Apparently, there was not much strength in Mincu. Stripped to the waist he was physically the inferior of Yorga. But what Mincu lacked in strength was amply compensated for in wits. Lina turned and said aloud to another woman, "That man there, Mincu, wants to commit suicide for me."

"No, Lina," Mincu answered, as he applied a head-lock on the other man, "I am committing murder."

It made everybody laugh and lost Yorga the match. He had not heard Lina's comment and Mincu's reply. The loud laughter surprised him, his muscles relaxed, and he fell on his shoulders like a wide, flat board. There were loud cheers for the winner. Still stripped to the waist, with a heavy coat thrown over his naked shoulders, Mincu took his place near Lina's right hand to watch the outcome of the second match, the winner of which he was to fight.

"A good idea of Murdo's, I say, Lina, to make

this night our wedding-night?" Mincu began his conversation with the girl.

She turned sharply on the boy and answered, "Your Murdo is a sly fox. I hate him for what he did to-night. And you must not cook the bird while it is still flying over the tree-tops."

"Oh, Lina, Lina, it is as good as done. I am better than any of the two now wrestling."

"You red-headed chatterbox," she turned on him, measuring the boy in one glance from foot to head.

Meanwhile the two other men in the ring had locked arms and the shouts from the onlookers rose and fell in waves. Outside the wind was raging and wrestling with the trees in the forest. Indoors men were fighting for a woman. The two men in the ring were of different tribes and the match was one in which other things than a woman were involved. As a matter of fact, the two men had already fought before. Stefan had an old grudge against Marin, one of Stancu's tribe, who had won a horse-race from him in which the horse was the stake. After winning the race, Marin looked at the horse he had won and, saying that it was not worth the food it would eat, he shot it dead in the presence of its former owner, all the others looking on. Stefan could make no protest against such cruelty. By right it had become Marin's property, and he was, as its master, free to do as he pleased. But

Stefan had loved the horse. Had raised it himself. And even more than from seeing his horse shot by another, he suffered from the intended insult. It was an insult to the whole tribe. It was the mutual hatred between those two men that Murdo had felt vibrating in the air when he called for the wrestling matches. Murdo realized it only afterwards; when the two men had stripped for action. The men of the two tribes were more interested than in the previous match. Lina, too, knew that to the winner of that match she was only a prize and not the bone of contention. And because of that, because she was of secondary importance, she soon turned her back to the ring and went to the opposite end of the barn to smoke a cigarette.

She had slipped away unnoticed by any save Mincu and Murdo, who kept an eye on her all the time.

"I hate them both," she said to the red-headed contender who sat down on the same bench.

"That's good to hear," Mincu exclaimed.

They were silent for a while. Then Lina put her arm round the boy's neck, and leaning close to his ear, she whispered:

"Mincu, my red-headed devil. You must win. You will be the best-loved man under the sun if you win. I know that Stefan will down Marin, but you must down Stefan, you must, you

must. Mincu, my red-headed lover . . . you must, you must."

It was such an unexpected turn that the young gypsy was taken by surprise.

Lina rose, and going to the door, she beckoned to Mincu to follow her out. Once outside Lina pressed the boy to her bosom and kissed him again and again as she said, "You must win, Mincu. If you lose I will kill myself . . . you must win!"

"I will," Mincu answered, and kissed her on the mouth before returning hurriedly to the barn, where pandemonium now reigned. Stefan had thrown Marin and was slowly pressing his shoulders to the ground. Marin's people begged their man to rally and rise but he was all winded and suddenly collapsed like a punctured bag.

Next minute the affair threatened to end in a free-for-all fight. The irresponsible, irrepressible gypsy blood was getting the upper hand. All danger, all practical conduct was about to be forgotten. And again Murdo saved the situation. By reason of age he was the supreme ruler, the *barossan.*

"The first man who speaks louder than is necessary will be a dead man," he shouted. "Where is Mincu?"

"Here I am, *barossan,*" called Mincu, as he edged his way to the ring.

"When will you be ready, Stefan?" asked Murdo.

"Ready for what?" asked Stefan, in seeming astonishment.

"To wrestle with Mincu, man!"

"Why should I wrestle with Mincu?"

"For Lina."

"For Lina!" exclaimed Stefan. "I wrestle for Lina! Ptui . . . who wants her . . . I? Do I want Lina, Stancu's Lina, you think? Ptui! Is Cozinca not nicer than a thousand Linas? Come here, Cozinca!" and Stefan folded a pretty gypsy girl in his long arms.

According to the code of the gypsies Stefan had committed a dozen crimes at that moment. First, the affront to Lina; then to her father; the affront to Stancu's tribe; the insult directed to Mincu, who gets a wife another man refuses to fight for; the insult to Murdo's tribe; and many other major and minor offenses developing from the one.

For a moment everybody looked at Mincu; then the attention was shifted to Murdo, who called aloud: "Lina is Mincu's wife! Now let us drink to their happiness!"

The men were anxious that it all end that way; that it be drowned in noise and wine.

They were all thirsty. The fiddlers began to play. The young ones to dance. Mincu and Lina sat alone in a corner. Lina was staring

vacantly before her. Her mouth twitched and she was all atremble.

Stefan had taken his revenge. For weeks he had begged her to be his wife. She had refused him. Now he had revenged himself. And with Cozinca! Cozinca, her deadliest enemy. Lina doubted not but that Cozinca had engineered it all. Only a woman could have planned it all to such detail. Stefan had fought Marin not because he wanted to avenge the old wrong. Not because he wanted to have her, to win her, Lina. Not even to revenge himself, but to please Cozinca. It was clear . . . clear as daylight!

Mincu, too, was downhearted. With one gesture Stefan had transformed Lina from a queen to the last woman on earth. "Ptui," Stefan had spat out after pronouncing Lina's name. She was not worth fighting for. That bride near him was a woman another man had refused.

Murdo's conclusion was mistaken. Lina could not be his wife as long as Stefan lived. It was the code of morals . . . it was the law. Mincu sat and brooded near his absent-minded bride. Neither of them spoke to the other. Before daylight, while the men were drinking and singing and the youths were dancing, Stefan and Mincu left the barn. Mincu was the first to leave. And when Stefan was seen to follow him every one knew what was going to happen, yet no one in-

terfered. The fiddlers stopped their playing. The dancing ceased. Everybody was silent, with ears to the wind and eyes to the door. Lina looked in the direction of Cozinca, then she took out a little hand-mirror from between the folds of her colored skirts and began to comb her long, black hair.

A little later Mincu appeared, alone, at the barn-door. A ready hand smothered Cozinca's first cry and she was carried to the tent of her mother. Then everybody left the barn leaving the two lovers to themselves.

The four chiefs buried the dead Stefan.

To avoid further trouble the men of each tribe kept apart by themselves and the common evenings were given up. January was a very cold month. Snowstorms and winds followed one another. Half the men slept near the horses and when the nights were very cold even women and children huddled together in the barn, covering themselves with straw and hay.

In the temporary repair shops the men wielded the hammers, blew the bellows, and wrought the iron for the wheels of the wagons.

Mincu, too, was very busy. He was the ablest of them all at trade. In the neighboring inns he learned, here and there, of a horse a peasant had for sale and of a horse a man wanted to buy and frequently made a neat profit without even bring-

ing the animal to the camp. And with this money he bought for his Lina vivid red shawls, and colored glass beads, and hair-combs, and silver rings, and bracelets. Yet the more he showed his love to her the more she turned away from him.

"You are only a slave, Murdo's slave," she said every day to him. "You are all a tribe of slaves and Stefan was a thousand times a better man than you are."

At first he laughed at what she said. As she was the daughter of a chief he understood her reluctance at having her husband follow another man's orders. She was only a foolish woman. There was no hope of his ever becoming the chief of the tribe. Murdo's son, Nicolai, was the successor. But in the long winter nights she spoke of nothing else. She used all the methods at her command. She cried, she refused herself, she flattered, she cajoled. Why! All he had to do was to gain ascendency over the other men. Murdo was old and kept himself apart from all. She knew that there were many who were dissatisfied with his rule. As to Nicolai, he was a weakling. All he cared for was his violin. Why should he not attempt it? Her red-headed devil was stronger and cleverer than any of the men. He was only a slave to an old man. Why should Murdo tell him where to go and what to do? Why should Murdo take all his money? Why should she, Lina, have to hide from view the most

beautiful things Mincu had given her, lest Murdo demand an account? Cozinca wore more jewels now than she. Had he not seen her new combs? Her new bracelets? Yet she, Lina, Stancu's daughter, the daughter of the best trader in the tribe, had to hide her husband's gifts, because in Murdo's tribe all the earnings had to be given to the chief.

The whole winter she worked on the man's nerves. When the snow was beginning to thaw Mincu's resistance also thawed and he began by criticizing Nicolai for his inactivity.

"A fine chief he will make, that fiddler son of Murdo's," he said to the men.

He related to Lina what he had said to the men and his wife kissed him and danced for joy.

"That is a good beginning," she said enthusiastically.

The following day he reported to Lina that the smith and his helper had talked over what he had said.

"True enough," they had said, "Nicolai is nothing more than a weakling."

"Let them talk. Don't go near them for a few days. Let them forget who said the first word," she advised Mincu. He did as he was told. He relied on her ability for intrigue.

"You will see, red-headed lover of mine. I will wear all the jewels in broad daylight. Those

I have and many more that you will buy for me. Cozinca will rage and rave."

A week before Easter Mincu, guided by Lina, had brought the situation to such a point that there was unanimous dissatisfaction with Nicolai. And when Mincu dared to make merry about the violin-playing of Murdo's son the men laughed with him.

The Sunday before Easter Lina gave Mincu twenty ducats in gold, from the money her mother had given her secretly as a wedding-gift, and told her husband to deliver the money to the chief in the presence of all.

"'Here,' you should say, 'Profits from a day's trade.'"

He did as she told him. Murdo said that he had always known Mincu to be a wonderful trader.

When the men complimented Lina's husband, he shrugged his shoulders and said that he could make as much every day . . . only what was the use? To enrich that fool of a Nicolai? And why did Murdo himself not go after trade instead of sitting in his tent counting the hairs of his beard?

At any other time he would have fared badly for such remarks about the chief, but those twenty ducats in gold gave him some rights. The gypsies were short in money. They had had too many losses the previous year. A few days later

Mincu again returned from town with golden ducats and presents for a few men and their wives.

On Good Friday he brought forty gold pieces. He spoke to the men before seeing Murdo.

"Enough to buy a new fiddle for Nicolai, hein?"

The hint was a reminder that Nicolai had bought a new violin a day or two before.

For Easter-time Lina decked herself in all the jewels and covered her shoulders with the reddest of red silk shawls. The white silk *basma* over her black hair was also a very expensive affair.

The weather was favorable to the display of vivid colors. An early spring had greened the fields and the forests. Already the horses were pasturing where yesterday the wolf had lain in ambush. Young and old turned out in the fields. It was as if life itself had thawed out. Mincu and Lina rode on two of the best horses; he in wide blue pantaloons falling in broad folds over new patent-leather boots, a silver-studded sleeveless jacket over an embroidered linen shirt, and a red silk sash; and she in a multitude of skirts made of silks of all colors which reached only a little below the knees. On her feet she had a pair of fine new patent-leather boots. Below the elbows her arms were heavily laden with bracelets of all metals and in all shapes: silver snakes,

golden bands ending in tiger heads, twisted copper rings, wide, filigreed hoops. From the neck hung *salbas* of golden ducats, and long earrings reached her shoulders.

Lina took care that Cozinca should see her.

The whole day Mincu and Lina rode together. They rode into the town and every one stared at them. So much color and so many jewels had never been worn by any gypsy in the memory of even the eldest inhabitant. They stopped at inns and winehouses and made merry with the peasants and the townspeople. They bought painted eggs, sticks of candy, sugar waffles, and candy whistles, and in one place, very close to the gypsy camp, Lina danced the *Hora* with the villagers. There were many gypsies around the wide dancing circle, there were beautiful young gypsy girls, but not one had dared to try to dance with the village folk. It was never done.

News of Lina's and Mincu's success preceded them to the camp. When they appeared, towards sundown, the people of the four tribes received them with great respect.

Murdo watched the two as they dismounted. Then he called to Mincu sharply, "Come here, Mincu."

Mincu fidgeted for a while as he was caught between the eyes of his chief and his wife. Lina expected him to revolt, the other to submit. Murdo also had caught Lina's telling glance.

The people separated and lined themselves on both sides, leaving a narrow space between the two men.

Slowly, reluctantly, with lowered eyes, Mincu approached the chief. Murdo looked at him with contempt. The suspense was crushing.

"From where come all these trinkets and *salbas* on your wife, Mincu?" he finally asked.

Mincu could have answered that they belonged to Lina, were given to her by her mother, he even intended to do so, but he answered instead, "I bought them."

"And who gave you permission?"

"It was my money, I earned it . . . my trade . . . or should I give all the money to buy fiddles for Nicolai?"

What he had said was a mechanical repetition of words Lina had put into his mouth.

"What?" bellowed Murdo, as his hand gripped the handle of a long knife he carried in his belt.

Mincu, too, was ready. His hand had traveled in the same direction as his chief's. And his fingers too had coiled around a knife's handle.

"Oh!" Murdo exclaimed, and instantly his hand dropped from his belt. "No, not the knife. My great-grandfather Lupu won the leadership of this tribe by another weapon, the *harapnic,* the whip. At midnight I and he," Murdo addressed his men, "enter the forest, bare to the waist—with whips as weapons. Only one man

comes out: the ruler. I have spoken," and Murdo returned slowly to his tent.

The *harapnic!* It was the most horrible weapon Murdo could have chosen. The news spread, like a prairie fire, among all the gypsies. Stancu, Lina's father, went to see Murdo and talked to him about it.

"It's a terrible thing, friend. . . . Choose another weapon."

"It is not a punishment, it is a contest, Stancu. He wants to be chief. The best man wins. He is young and strong. My great-grandfather, my *stremosh,* Lupu, came to the rulership by the whip. I will defend it with the same weapon," and as he spoke with Stancu, Murdo slowly oiled the braided leather tongue of the terrible *harapnic,* the whip used to break the stubbornest horse. From Murdo's tent Stancu went to the tent of his daughter. She was still fully dressed and decked in all her jewelry.

"Lina, that was your work!" the father charged his daughter.

"I am the daughter of a chief, and my man must also be a chief."

"And you, Mincu, have you nothing to say? If you become the chief I shall not be the only one to know that you are the slave of a woman. Even if you lived a thousand years you could never acquire Murdo's wisdom. Go to him, ask publicly for penance, and you will be honored

more even than if you became chieftain," spoke Stancu to his daughter's husband.

But Lina refused to let her father talk further and she asked him to leave them alone. The old man left the tent shrugging his shoulders and muttering, "Serpents, serpents."

"Don't fear, Mincu, my red-headed devil. You will soon come back and be the ruler. I have prepared oils that will take the heat out of the wounds on your body. You will not feel them at all," Lina cooed softly to her man.

Mincu looked at her. What had he not already done for that woman! He had killed Stefan. He had lied to his friends. Cheated his chief. Mocked at Nicolai. And now he was going to fight Murdo. And with the whip! He had seen the old chief handle the braided leather tongue. It opened a deep gash where it struck. It broke the tough skin of a horse, laid the flesh open to the bone where it landed. Mincu went to the place where he kept his whip. He had braided it himself from cowhide strips. A good whip. It was the pride of his youth. Even the best *giambash,* horsedealer, had admired it. It was a work of art. Nine strips braided together. The short handle, too, was covered with braided leather. It was easy to grip and hold.

But Murdo! His arm; his arm of steel. And Mincu knew that Murdo, for all the years he carried, was younger in body than the youngest.

While he sat and brooded Lina spoke words of cheer to him. Why! Did he not feel that he was born to be a ruler? Did he want his children to slave for such as Nicolai? For such as Stefan? And did he not know that Cozinca was to marry Nicolai, just to spite her and persecute her and him and their children as soon as her husband should become the chief of the tribe?

At midnight the two men, bare to the waist, with *harapnics* in hand, entered the forest. The night was clear and warm. Over the top of the naked forest the cold moon glided in a warm blue sky. As soon as the men had entered the forest the gypsies began to build fires and sit around them. Softly at first, but, as time went on, louder and louder, some of the gypsies began to sing a slow, moaning song. As the tension increased the song became louder and the rhythm less firm, until it became a series of howls, wild, savage, hysterical shrieks, that had been pent up for too long in the breasts of men.

Each camp tried to outdo the other. The dogs howled, the women cried, the men shrieked, the cows mooed, and even the horses neighed and whinnied.

Hour after hour passed slowly. When the gypsies could no longer shout or howl, they got dish-pans from the tents and beat them with their fists and with sticks as they thronged round and

round the fire in a mad dance.

Every once in a while there was absolute silence when some one shouted that he had heard a cry from the forest; had heard the swish of a whip. But always it proved to be a false alarm. The increased velocity of the wind. The call of a bird to its mate. A scared fox.

At daylight the fires were extinguished. The noise ceased and all faces were turned towards the fringe of the forest.

An hour after sunrise, Murdo, whip in hand, his body covered with blood, a diagonal gash across his face, reeled out from behind the trees. The first person he saw was Lina. He looked at her steadily, and, as he looked at her, a new idea sprang into life. Decked in all her jewelry, she was waiting outside the opening of her tent. In two jumps the old, bleeding chief was near the woman.

"So . . . you wanted a chief for a husband, woman, did you not? Here I am . . . an undisputed chief; but . . ." and tearing the jewelry from Lina's neck and ears, he continued in a loud voice, "the trappings will go, the silken dresses, too; here, here, here," and whirling the whip over his head he let it fall once across Lina's bare body. "Take this, too . . . taste it . . . it will do you good."

And turning to the assembled people he

yelled, "Dance and make merry. It's Murdo's wedding-day!"

And they danced and made merry the whole day long, while Lina was applying the oils and salves she had prepared for Mincu to the wounds of her new husband.

In her tent Cozinca was crying, "Lina has played with loaded dice. She won. She won even more when she lost."

VLAD'S SON

It was my father's boast that he had half of Europe at his feet. A flat-bottomed rowboat or a spacious log raft was always moored to an iron ring embedded in the rock on which we built our home on the shore of the Danube. And every good Rumanian holds that the Danube is half of Europe.

Back of the house rolled an undulating stretch of pasture-ground, in which roamed the cattle of the village. It was the common pasture-ground of the community. The cows came there from miles away early every morning and returned home by themselves in time for the evening's milking. Watch-dogs, sure-footed and heavy-coated, did their hereditary duty without any one's paying any special attention to them. Food they had in plenty; the slaughter-house was not far from the pasture.

Twice every year the same stretch did duty as fair-grounds. Early every spring, even before the snow had melted, tents and shanties were put up and for fully ten days before Easter the peasants of our village and the surrounding villages, with their women and children, were in

the *khan*—the inn—from early morning to late at night.

At the close of the fair there was not a red copper left in the district. Most of the money had gone to foreign lands. From the Tartars the Rumanian peasants bought young long-horned oxen; from the Russians, furs; long-haired, heavy-mustached Hungarians from Budapest and short-sighted Germans from Leipzig sold them plows and cultivators, and, coming from far America, a Yankee salesman sold brightly colored harvesting-machines, binders and mowers, which attracted considerable attention, not only for themselves but because they were brought from America—from far away, from so far away. . . . This alone gave them a romantic glamour in the eyes of the Rumanians.

The spring fair was the buying-fair, but in the fall, after the cattle were stabled, the wheat threshed and the corn put away in the cribs, the fair-grounds were given over to the selling of the products of the land—wheat, rye, corn, honey, sheep, pigs, cows and horses. The peasants brought all they had to the *yarmarock*. The money thus obtained for their products in those ten days was all the income for the year. And those ten days and the ten days after and more, if the summer had been a good one and prices decent, were days of great gayety, with the never-ending music of the *tziganes* and the never-end-

ing flow of newly pressed wine oozing from the wooden wine-press directly into the earthen pitcher, and never-ending dancing, singing and shouting.

Not a day passed without a wedding. It was the month of *Sfintu Dumitru,* the month during which nearly all the weddings of the rural districts of Rumania take place.

The yearly fall fair of Cerna Voda was one of the best known in Rumania. The gypsies swarmed in from all sides. Horse-trading tribes came in their high-wheeled wagons drawn by small Moldavian ponies; coppersmith tribes came on foot, the men carrying the kettles and tongs on their backs and the women in gayly colored dresses embroidered in gold and silver holding the small children on their shoulders and balancing the family belongings, the blankets and the quilts on their heads; while the older children, half-naked and barefooted, marched in droves back of the tribe. Gypsy musicians played the violin and the flute on the road as they marched, quarreling, fighting and holding musical contests under the blue sky on the edge of a forest, with their bare feet dangling in the water of some lake or brook.

And one must not forget the blond Slovaks and Croats, as they came in their furred pants and long sheepskin coats, with heavy rolls of steel and copper wire dangling on their shoul-

ders, working as they walked, twisting the wires into all sorts of useful things—rat-traps, sieves, rings, dog-collars and clothes-pins, calling out their wares to the empty space by sheer force of habit; docile and patient beasts of burden, known never to grumble, never to rest; in one year traversing Rumania from one end of the Carpathian Mountains to the other and in the following year all the length of the Danube to where the river falls into the Black Sea; lying down to sleep where the night overtook them, in the dust of the road in summer and in hastily built snow-huts in the winter.

To the people of Cerna Voda, in fact to the whole population of the Dobrudja, Vlad's gypsy tribe was one of the best known. All his people, men, women and children, were never referred to by their names. The peasant merely designated them as a Vlad man or a Vlad woman.

Vlad, the chief, was the ruler; his word was law for the fourscore and more people composing his tribe. And before his wrath they all trembled and the strongest of them was cowed by just one glance from Vlad's lone, big dark eye.

The gypsy chief was a tall, straight, well-built man of fifty with long red hair and beard, with a thin black mustache hardly covering a high overlip under a well-lined nose. As lithe and noiseless as a panther in his gait, quiet-spoken,

calm, he gave the impression of the born ruler of men, the man who dictated life and death.

He never bartered. But before any deal was closed by any of his men he was consulted, and his word was the last. His knowledge of horses was uncanny, and the peasants were convinced that he could speak to a horse in its language and order it to do just what he wanted.

It was known also that Vlad was the best horse-thief, and because he had never been caught he was held in great respect. No matter how well a horse was guarded, if Vlad had taken a fancy to it the animal disappeared from the stable. And once gone, it was gone forever. And because Vlad stole only the best, it was a compliment to the owner when the lone-eyed, red-headed gypsy chief stole the animal.

That year had been a great one for farmers on the shore of the Danube. There had been plenty of seasonal rain, and when the wheat was ready to be harvested, the sun baked the ground dry. The sheaves had never been heavier; the corn, too, had yielded more than in any other year.

Because of droughts in other places, grain prices were so high that after the fall fair was over each peasant had more money in his pockets than he had ever had before. There were not enough musicians to play at all the weddings that

took place, and each wedding feast lasted at least three days. The *tziganes,* the musicians, *lautars,* worked themselves to death, snatching bits of sleep on their feet as they played the interminable waltzes and *doinas* for the joyous youths.

In the thick of this joy, on a Friday, Vlad's tribe arrived from the Black Sea. Much to the chagrin of his son, Radu, who was in love with Anica, the daughter of the innkeeper of Cerna Voda, the chief had miscalculated the time and the tribe was too late for the fair. But because men and beasts were tired Vlad decided to pitch camp on the fair-grounds and rest. They had with them some very fine horses and some black sheep they had brought from Astrakhan to sell for breeding.

The peasant youth had arranged a horse-race for the following Sunday. Among the riders was Tudor, the mayor's son, on a little chestnut filly of his. She was the pride of the village. Mara, the filly, won the race before she started from the post. If the others partook in the race at all, it was to see how far behind the filly they could run.

The eyes of every one were on the little animal, which stowed away space and air and seemed, with her outstretched neck and fuming nostrils, to be thirsty for more and more space to conquer.

After the race was over the whole village sur-

rounded Tudor and his horse. The men shook hands with the young man, the women covered him with flowers and the young girls braided colored ribbons taken from their own hair into the mane of the little filly. Vlad, the gypsy, stood at a distance, outside the circle of Tudor's friends.

From the instant his eye had taken in the sweep of the little mare's shape he had thought of nothing else. He had never owned a horse he liked so well. Not even that black stallion, Stica, for whom the whole tribe mourned when he died.

Vlad had thought Stica to be his last love, that his heart would never more go out to a horse, and suddenly that little filly caught his eye and awoke his inherent slumbering passion—a passion which only those of gypsy blood can understand.

Unable to hold out any longer, the gypsy chief approached the beaming Tudor and throwing his arm round the horse's neck he brought out the right hand from his pocket full of gold, and said:

"Take it all, and give me the horse, Tudor, son of Miron."

Tudor trembled as he pushed away the handful of gold.

"This horse is not for sale, man. Take your gold away and don't tempt me."

The offer of a handful of gold was a great com-

pliment, coming as it did from Vlad, the best horseman in Rumania, but the boy loved the horse and he knew that the innkeeper's daughter, Anica, would never forgive him if he ever parted with Mara. He knew how passionately she loved the horse, and he also knew that if she had consented to marry him instead of Radu, Vlad's son, it was only because he was the owner of Mara.

"This horse is not for sale, Vlad," he repeated again and again, as he pushed the proffered gold away.

The gypsy, still with his left arm round Mara's neck, called to one of his men and spoke a few words to him in his own language. The man dashed away to the chief's tent. The peasants watched the transaction. Vlad fixed his lone eye on Tudor, and the boy fidgeted with the fringes of his red sash and repeated:

"It's not for sale, Vlad. It's not for sale. You don't understand, Vlad. I can't sell this horse."

The gypsy messenger returned with two leather pouches, holding one in each hand. Vlad called Tudor nearer to him.

"Open your hands, boy," he called out, and as Tudor did so he poured gold-pieces from the pouch into the cupped palms.

"Is that enough?" he asked, when one of the pouches was empty.

Tudor raised his eyebrows and looked at the

peasants who stood with mouths agape at the sight of so much gold. No one said a word. Tudor was vacillating, when he suddenly saw Anica coming on a run from the inn.

Flushed, perspiring, the clean-limbed, dark-eyed daughter of a gypsy woman and a Rumanian father rushed up to the boy and with her breath still hot she asked:

"You did not, did you?"

His hands were full of gold and Vlad's hands were round the filly's neck.

"No, I did not, Anica," he answered.

"Then why does Vlad hold the horse? Let go of Mara, Vlad," she said, trying to pry his arm loose. "And you, Tudor, give him back his gold, or all is broken between us."

"Oh, I see," Vlad remarked. "This is Anica, the innkeeper's daughter, is it not? Where is Radu? Is he not with you? He was so anxious to come to Cerna Voda—because of you. Or is this not Anica, the innkeeper's daughter?"

"So she is," the peasants echoed.

"Well, well, look how fast she has grown!" Vlad continued in an oily voice. "And Tudor is—bless me, bless me—and I thought she was in love with my son, Radu—bless me, bless me—— The ways of women, the ways of women!"

"I will have none of your Radu; I will have none of your people—puppets without a will of

their own, who forever depend on what Vlad will say or do," Anica shouted at him. "And do please let go of that horse and go God's way. Let go, I say," she screamed, as she tried to lead the horse away. "Let go, let go."

Vlad looked at her.

"Hold out your hands, Anica," he ordered, and as she obeyed, without thinking, the gypsy chief emptied all the gold of the second pouch into her cupped hands.

"And I shall pay all the wedding expenses besides," he announced, winking to the peasants, "and I will have to buy a beautiful girl for my son, Radu—one more beautiful than you, Anica, if possible."

People looked at one another, not daring to say a word lest the spell be broken. Tudor looked pleadingly at his flushed gypsy girl. So much gold all at once for a horse! It was a fortune. She met his gaze with contempt.

"No, Vlad, that horse is not for sale. As for the wedding expenses, I give thanks to the Lord that I am not an orphan. Take your gold," and before Vlad had time to utter another word, she emptied her hands, made Tudor empty his into the gypsy's coat pocket, and with one jump she was on the horse and up and away from the fairgrounds.

Vlad, pale and shaking as with the ague, looked to the perplexed Tudor, shrugged his

shoulders and gave a short laugh. Then he left the crowd to enter his tent. The peasants surrounded the excited boy.

"You'd better get the money, Tudor, and let him have the horse."

"When Vlad wants a horse, he gets it," said the village priest. "We know that, don't we, people?"

"Yes, he has a way with horses. He casts a spell over them and they evaporate from the stable like thin air. You may guard the stable day and night, and the horse disappears. He bewitches them," explained another man.

"He does, he does," many assented.

"Have you not seen how he looked at the little filly? Who knows but what the two spoke together when he had his arm around her? Who knows? Who knows?"

"Nonsense," said young Tudor. "It's my horse and I won't sell it. Have I not as much right to own the horse as a *tzigane?* What?"

"The truth of the matter is," explained Jonica, the oldest inhabitant of Cerna Voda, "that Anica does not want him to sell the horse. You know, Anica, really—because of her mother's blood—— When they love a horse they sacrifice everything, are ready to do anything—trample upon others and even destroy themselves for a horse, for a particular horse."

"Have you not heard?" remarked another

man. "She marries Tudor instead of Radu because Tudor owns the horse, and Vlad, Vlad is ready to break his son's heart for the same horse. Ah, these gypsies!"

Nothing else was talked about at the inn.

All the horse-lore of hundreds of years was reviewed, and it was agreed that the price Vlad had offered was the weight in gold of that little filly. And as the wine mounted to the heads of the peasants, bets were laid as to whether Vlad would get the horse or not.

Anica, barefooted, fleet-limbed, dressed only in a long white shirt of linen belted at the waist, served the drinks at the tables.

"No, the horse is not for sale," she said in answer to all inquiries.

"But, girl, you know very well that if Vlad wants the horse nothing will stand in his way. You know that, don't you? And is it fair to Radu to leave him for Tudor because of a horse?" asked old Jonica, the village's story-teller. "And Vlad will get the horse anyhow."

"Nonsense. Tudor will hold watch day and night," the innkeeper's daughter interrupted him, "and he can shoot straight. As to Radu, you don't understand, Tata Jonica, you don't understand. He is only a puppet, not a man. He should have been here four weeks ago. Why did he not come in time?

"He did not. He did not come because his father had willed otherwise. He, Radu, has no will of his own. That's it, Tata Jonica."

"Just like her mother, Reposata, may she rest in peace," muttered the old peasant to himself as he watched Anica rush from table to table. "Ah, that gypsy blood, that tempestuous blood!"

"Ah, youth, youth," the older peasants laughed. "Tudor will watch over the horse! As if it mattered. Vlad will call and it will come. He once bewitched a horse, and it came to him when he called—came riding through space on a broomstick."

The village split into two factions. One believed that the gypsy would get the horse, and the other that he would not. They said that Tudor and Anica were a match for any gypsy.

That very evening a dozen youths offered to stand watch at night to relieve Tudor. One climbed on the roof, armed to the teeth; two young boys posted themselves in the stall, and the four sides of the stable were guarded by two men on each side with a sentinel pacing up and down two hundred feet away. For it was known that Vlad's cunning was much above the ordinary. At midnight the guard was changed, and at daylight the whole village was at the *khan* to inquire about the horse. Was Mara still there?

Vlad, too, came in and was followed by his son, Radu. The young gypsy, the image of his

father, walked up to Anica, and leaning far over the bar, he spoke to her.

"So that was behind all you said to me yesterday? *Hein,* Anica? So that's what you did, Anica? Because of a horse you threw me over for the mayor's son. What is he more than I am, I ask? Is he stronger than I am? Is he richer? What? As if I could not give you a horse just as beautiful! What?"

"No," answered Anica, "you could not keep a horse if your father ordered it sold, and for so much gold, too. He, he is his own master, not a puppet of his father as you are. You are not even known by your own name. You are known only as 'Vlad's son.' Fancy how they would call me 'Vlad's son's wife.' Phew!" and she spat on the floor and threw back her head as she showed a row of glittering white teeth.

"Vlad is a chief, but he is my father," Radu answered. "I am sure that he would not be against giving you whatever you want if I asked."

"Not at all," retorted Anica. "Only yesterday he offered to pay the expenses of the wedding between Tudor and myself if I would let him have the horse."

Radu bit his underlip and kept quiet.

"And you are all, all of you, sheep, cowards. Tudor is a man. I never knew it until yesterday. Four handfuls of gold for a horse, and

when I said 'No,' he did not have to ask his father. No it was."

"Much of a man, the man who does what a woman wants," sneered the young gypsy.

"But he did not have to ask his father. He did it because I wanted. He did it to please me. To please me," and she beat her heart proudly as she looked defiantly at him.

She served drinks to a few people. When she was free again Radu leaned over the counter and spoke once more.

She did not answer. She remembered long walks in the night—kisses, embraces, promises——

He looked into her eyes as he drank the full quart-pitcher of wine in one draft.

"And suppose he would have sold the horse, what then?" he inquired. "Suppose he loses the horse, Anica? Suppose he loses the horse?"

"There is not enough gold in the whole world to buy that horse from Tudor, and he guards it with his life," she replied to the subtle proposition made by the young gypsy.

Vlad, who sat all alone at a table, heard the words of the girl and snickered. The gypsy girl looked at him and trembled.

"You had better advise Tudor to take the money," whispered a newly arrived customer in the girl's ear.

"Keep quiet, you drunken weakling," she snapped.

Marin, the innkeeper, came in from the back door. His eyes were still heavy with sleep. He yawned as he took a long drink of prune-juice to put himself in shape for the day's work and offered the bottle afterward to his customers.

"Good morning, Vlad. Here is his son, too, grown big and strong. Take a sip, take a sip. Here, it's a man's drink."

Anica looked at Radu, as much as to say:

"Do you hear how they call you?" and the boy bent his head in shame.

While they were talking Tudor came in with his father. The mayor, Miron, shook hands with the gypsy chief; they were old friends—had swapped horses many a time, had drunk from the same glass in token of friendship.

"Glad to see you, Vlad."

"Glad to see you, Miron," Vlad answered, as he made room for the mayor at the table.

"Marin, bring a fresh pitcher and give wine to the men."

Vlad and the mayor drank quietly and spoke about the harvest, the fair and the prices of wheat and corn. The mayor had an inquisitive mind and wanted to know news and gossip of other places; wanted to know about the Tartar chief who had been killed by one of his women in Cocosh, fifty miles from Cerna, and about the

new bridge that was thrown over the Danube.

Vlad knew all about everything, because he traveled. Miron read about the happenings in the only newspaper, which came once a week to the village and which he used to explain to the assembled peasants in front of the little church on Sundays after services.

Excepting the priest, he was the only man who could read—with great difficulty, it is true, and half the words used by the writers were a mystery to him, but he could get the drift of what he read and translate it into the flowery language of the Rumanian peasants—the old Latin dialect, ornamented with Greek, Turkish and Russian.

Radu and Tudor stood leaning against the counter. Both were being served by the innkeeper's dark-eyed, dark-haired daughter. Each talked to her without looking at the other. Without any exchange of words a drinking-contest was started between the two. Such contests ended only when one of the contestants fell to the floor, dead to the world around him.

"A pitcher of last year's wine," ordered Tudor.

"And of the same for me," ordered Radu, and both young men gulped down the blood-red juice in one draft.

It was a contest not only of quantity but one of speed also. The peasants looked on and got ready to take up wagers.

"Another one," demanded Tudor.

"Here, too," motioned Radu.

"Here, Anica," motioned the mayor's son, as he gave the empty pitcher again to the girl.

"Here, too, and bring me a two-quart pitcher this time," the gypsy boy ordered.

Anica hesitated. In a drinking-contest the same measure was served to the contestants. It was an old rule. And Radu was strong. He could drink, she knew that.

"Just bring him a pitcher the same as mine," Tudor spoke excitedly as he straightened up.

"I asked for a double pitcher," insisted Radu, as his fingers coiled around the hilt of his knife, which protruded over the broad red belt.

He looked only at the girl, facing her across the counter.

"Give what I ordered."

The mayor and the gypsy chief had watched the contest between their sons from their seats on a bench behind a table on the farther end of the wall. They were watching the contest with extraordinary intensity, which they screened with talk about crops and travel.

But the moment Radu had grasped the hilt of his knife and the peasants had drawn in a circle to make room for the fight, Vlad jumped up and yelled to his son:

"Return to your tent!"

Radu's fingers uncoiled from the knife, his

arm dropped limply by his side and he prepared to leave. He looked into the lone eye of his father as he retreated from the counter. He looked again at his father and at the girl, and as the door framed his erect body, he called out:

"Father, you have gone too far."

Then he laughed and stepped out into the road.

"That's what I call a father's rule," spoke an old peasant.

"Radu is just a plain coward," said Anica, as she went on with her work. "No man could order me around that way. And he is a man! Calls himself a man, ha!"

A week passed and then another week, and the horse was still in Tudor's stable. The youth of the village watched over it day and night. After the second week Vlad could no longer enter the inn without being jeered at. That it should take him so long to make good the silent threat was a sign of decay. He was getting old, too old.

Everybody looked at him with contempt. The people who had bet that he would get the horse wondered that he, Vlad, should have lost his cunning, and the young men who watched the horse openly laughed at him.

"Vlad's other eye was the better one," they said to one another, loud enough for the gypsy chief to hear.

He had lost his other eye in a fight with a Tartar whom he had killed.

His own people, too, began to lose faith in him and no longer feared their ruler. Several deals were closed by his son, Radu, without his permission. It was an unprecedented infringement of his law. But his son grew more and more daring.

Vlad had met Radu late at night hovering around the stable where the filly was kept, and although he had ordered him away he had met him there again and again and had to make believe that he did not see him at all.

The gypsies asked one another why they were still staying in Cerna Voda. Through Vlad's miscalculation they had missed the fair, and now they were missing the great fair at Constanza on the Black Sea. All because he had become infatuated with a horse.

Of course, they knew what such passion meant. Each one of them had at some time or other been attached to some beautiful animal, and each one's heart had been broken. Some of the horses had died, others became crippled and were shot in mercy, and still others were sold at the orders of Vlad when some big price was offered. For Stica, the stallion he had loved so much, Vlad had given away every pet horse and almost all the gold of the tribe; even to the *salbas,* necklaces, the women had worn.

They could never forget or forgive that. He was a passionate man, Vlad was. His passions were his strength. And he broke every other man's passion for women or horses as soon as it was manifested, lest one of them grow strong with the rising greed and dare oppose his rule when occasion offered.

Only the ruler had a right to strong passions. Such was his dictum. And now a slip of a girl was opposing him! He knew, and his people knew, that Tudor did not count. And if the will of a girl were stronger than his passion, than his cunning, he was no longer fit to rule.

All this was now muttered of and spoken about under their breaths. It was time he was called to account. He was a great chief and all that, but every once in a while all they had saved in years was given away in a day to satisfy one of his whims.

And he broke every one's heart. Nothing was sacred before the fire of his passion. The gypsies grumbled, but no one dared say a word before the face of the chief.

Vlad grew thinner every day. He had loved women and had grieved when he lost them. He had loved horses and had been ready to pay the price of fools, but never yet had there been a woman or an animal that he could not get when he wanted. There was that Circassian slave-girl he had stolen from the harem of a *pasha*. She

was Radu's mother. Much chance the *pasha* had with all his eunuchs once Vlad had set his eye upon the girl! And before that he had stolen the daughter of a *Boyar* and made her his wife.

And from that Russian general in Bessarabia, whose stables were guarded by armed soldiers day and night, he had stolen the best horse. The general called him into his room afterward and gave him hundreds of gold-pieces. Vlad recalled how the officer's hands shook as he begged.

"It was the horse which the Czar has mounted, the horse which the Czar has mounted! I shall have to commit suicide if it is lost."

He returned the horse and ever since the general had been his best friend. And now whatever plan he laid was thwarted by Anica, one of his own people on her mother's side.

But never had he loved a horse so much as he loved that little filly, and never before had his reputation or his rule been at stake. It was a fatal day on which he had seen Mara. The whole affair had gone too far. He could never rule his people if he were to give it up. Radu and some others were already defying his authority.

And the peasants made fun of him! On the Sunday after the first snowfall of the year a young peasant came up to him on an old nag and in mock seriousness offered the nag for sale to the gypsy.

"You see, Vlad, I have decided that as a great

chief you are entitled to own the best horse in the country."

He had become the joke of the village. Vlad could see that in the eyes of the innkeeper and his daughter. Miron, the mayor, smiled every time he saw him. Only some of the oldest peasants were not convinced of the gypsy's defeat. The priest said it every evening at the inn, as he drank his last glass before retiring.

"Vlad will get the horse. The young pups will soon grow lax. He bides his time. You will see, Vlad will get the horse."

But the young peasants did not intend to grow lax. The old barn was fitted out with tables, benches, barrels and pitchers, and soon became the meeting-place of the boys and girls of the village. Anica was there every night and her laughter could be heard above the din and noise.

Tudor was the host. His little mustache was waxed now every morning until its points were like needles, just to show his pride and insolence. To taunt Vlad he rode his horse up to the gypsy's tent one Sunday.

"How do you like my little filly, Vlad? She is not bad to look at, ha?"

On the fourth Sunday after the fair the priest announced the wedding of Tudor and Anica.

Radu managed to see the girl alone. He begged her to marry him instead. How could she throw him over like that?

But Anica sneered:

"Marry you? You! And have your father order you, 'Return to your tent,' when a man insults you! I marry a *man.* A man who is his own master. A man who refuses handfuls of gold for a horse, when I love the horse, and who knows how to guard the horse even against Vlad. That's the *man* I marry. Nobody will ever speak about him as the 'mayor's son.' You could not keep the horse against your father's orders. You could not keep me against his orders. You are afraid of him. You would not dare to do anything without his permission. How can a woman love, marry you? How could she?"

She said this and many other things, even if her heart were not as set as her tongue was cutting.

Radu was handsomer and stronger than Tudor. There were things about him she liked. Her blood echoed to his. But she hated his slavish submission to Vlad. Why did he not act like a man? She had heard of at least one occasion when Vlad took to his tent the bride of another man on the wedding day, just to assert his rule.

The young gypsy cried. He showed her the tree near which he had first kissed her. He reminded her how she had sworn love to him and how she had taken him away from Maria, the blacksmith's daughter. But she would not hear of it.

No, she was going to marry a man who was called by his own name and not after his father. A man who could keep a horse she loved, who could refuse handfuls of gold.

"Handfuls of gold, handfuls of gold," she repeated.

A man who dared, who was brave and cunning, who could guard what he had, what she loved.

The conversation between the two had taken place on a Wednesday evening. The wedding between Anica and Tudor was to take place on the following Sunday. The *khangiu,* the innkeeper, engaged the best musicians. It was to be one of the most lavish wedding feasts. From Sunday to Sunday. The whole *khan* was decorated with colored papers and holly and paper lanterns of all kinds. In the kitchen a dozen women prepared viands and spicy food for the men.

It was to be such a feast as the village had never seen. No limit to the quantity of wine and brandy. Wedding presents for the couple were piled up against two walls. On one wall, what the women had given—the best of their looms, rolls of homespun linen and coarse silk, *borangick,* that had been blanched for months in the sun. Mats, rugs, embroidered towels and folds upon folds of narrow belts of silk, *betele,*

that hold together the two halves of the peasant women's skirts.

And leaning against the other wall, visible to all, were the presents of the men, each piece separate—pistols of all makes, knives with silver and ivory hilts, guns, long Turkish swords, *yataghans,* fur coats, fur hats, boots, pipes, cartridge-belts. Oh, they were not niggardly, the men of Cerna Voda, and God had been good to them that year!

And just after the public exhibit of it all, and as the last few benches were placed, early in the morning on Sunday, Tudor fell headlong at the door of the inn, pale and shaking.

He had just enough strength left to blurt out, "The horse, the horse——"

"The horse what?" yelled Anica, as she shook his limp arm.

"The horse—the horse—" the boy tried to explain.

"Tell me what has happened—is she killed? Did she die? What? Tell me," Anica begged, between sobs of anger. "Tell me, Tudor, tell me, tell me!"

But Tudor was becoming incoherent in his speech. He only repeated: "The horse—the horse."

Leaving Tudor prostrated on the floor, Anica darted away to the stable of the filly. It was empty.

In a few minutes the inn was beleaguered. The priest passed by on his way to church. After he had heard, he went no farther. He knew nobody would come to church. The excitement was too intense. The horse had disappeared from the stable. How? When? No one knew. The young men who had been in charge of the night watch had ridden away to find the horse, vowing they would never return without Mara.

When the excitement was at its highest, Vlad came rushing to the inn. The older peasants gave him a rousing welcome. The younger ones looked to him with a mixture of awe and contempt. A supernatural being, Vlad, the great chief. A sorcerer!

"Vlad is *still* Vlad," said the priest. "You thought you knew better, *hein?*"

Jonica slapped the gypsy chief on his broad shoulders.

"Well, well, it was *we* against *them,*" he said, showing the older men on one side and the young men on the other.

"But what does it all mean?" asked Vlad.

"It's about the horse, you know," said Marin, the innkeeper, clinking glasses and laughing his broadest.

"What has happened to the horse?" the gypsy yelled with all the strength of his lungs.

"Come, on, come, come, we are good sports," said several peasants, as they dragged the gypsy

toward the counter. "The best wine here, Marin."

Vlad tore himself away with one jerk and rushed to the dejected Tudor.

"What's the matter with the horse, you young good-for-nothing?"

"Stolen, stolen, stolen," and he spat in disgust.

The older peasants laughed at the comedy, and the priest forgot all dignity and swung his hat and giggled——

"Look at Vlad; look at him!"

In a moment there was pandemonium in the inn. Anica, on coming back from the stable, threw herself at the chief's feet and begged him to return to her the horse.

"It is my horse," she cried.

He looked hard at her.

She screamed that it was because of Mara that she had agreed to marry Tudor. It was her horse. Her horse.

Vlad swore that he knew nothing about it. His face twitched and changed colors until it turned a sickly green, as if it were bruised from the inside. He threw himself on the bench near the crying Tudor and he, too, sobbed.

They did not believe him. Jonica and the priest, his stanchest admirers, least of all. The mayor came in and laughed as he shook the limp hands of the chief.

"Good work! I told you, Tudor, that sooner

or later he would get the filly."

"But I did not, Miron. I swear I did not."

They laughed. Ah, Vlad was having some fun!

Soon all the gypsies were in the inn.

They laughed and made much noise.

"Drinks here. Vlad is *still* Vlad."

What did they think of him, *hein?* Watch a horse when he wanted it! There was no better man in the country, in the world.

Vlad was sick of denying that he knew anything about the horse. Anica swore that the wedding was called off; that she would never marry a man who could not watch a horse.

During one of her passionate outbursts Radu entered the inn. His twinkling eye met the gaze of the innkeeper's daughter and she trembled from head to foot when he left the inn as unobserved as he had entered it. Vlad saw his son leave and prepared to leave also.

"Listen here," said the mayor. "Return the horse. We shall settle that later."

"I know nothing about the horse," answered Vlad, and fell limply on a chair. "I wish to God I did."

All eyes were turned on the two men. The mayor was not fair. One should not speak to Vlad in that way. One could read in their eyes that such was the thought in the heart of the peas-

ants. No. One should not speak that way to Vlad.

"I will put you in chains, Vlad. The joke has gone too far. Show us where you have hidden the horse," and the mayor tried to assert his authority.

"I know nothing about the horse," assured Vlad, and his voice, broken and feeble, trembled.

"It's time for the wedding," broke in the priest in a conciliatory tone, as he placed himself between the two men. "We shall speak about horses later."

Tudor got up from his chair.

"There will be no wedding." Anica stamped her foot and beat the table with her hands. "The man I marry must be a *man*."

She had hardly finished the last word when Radu, mounted on the stolen filly, rode to the door of the inn.

"Mayor," he yelled, "leave the poor old man in peace. It is I who took the horse," and before any one could say a word Anica had jumped up behind him on the chestnut filly.

"Eat the wedding feast by yourselves. We will get married in the church of the next village."

Vlad left the inn, staggering on his feet like a drunkard.

"So he did it! He, he, he!"

Radu now had found strength and cunning in his passion. It was all over, all over!

When Radu returned to Cerna Voda the following day, his father had disappeared. He, Vlad, refused to be known merely as Radu's father.

And the people made merry, sang, drank and danced for seven days and seven nights. Yea, they sang and danced and drank for seven days and seven nights!

YAHDE, THE PROUD ONE

It was during the fast of the Ramazan that Kurguz Mehmet, the chief of the Tartar tribe, lost his beloved wife, Sahande. For that reason the Bairam feast, celebrated after the fasts were over, was the saddest one in his life.

Kurguz Mehmet was the last one of a long line of chiefs. Like his forefathers he was born in the marshland that forms an open square between the Danube and the Black Sea, and like his father he was the undisputed lord of his tribe, minding very little the fact that the Dobrudja, the territory he was living in, had passed from the dominion of Constantinople into the hands of Rumania.

The change of dominion hardly affected Kurguz and his tribe. No government could interfere with the marshland Tartars, for they and they alone knew the paths that led in and out of the mossy pasture-land where they lived and on which little Arabian horses roamed at will, to be coralled every year a week or two before the great fair of Constanza on the Black Sea.

Kurguz Mehmet had been very much attached to Sahande. A year after he had married her he

divorced his two other wives, gave to their fathers twice as many pieces of gold as he had paid for them, as was provided in the marriage agreement, and remained to live alone with the soft-voiced, curly-headed daughter of the *imman*.

For twenty years they had lived in perfect peace and agreement. He trusted her, confided in her and never doubted her during his frequent absences when he was trading horses, sheep and honey with other tribes of his people or with the gypsies who camped occasionally amongst them.

And then suddenly, in the first days of the ninth moon, during the Ramazan, Sahande became ill with the marsh fevers, and two days later she departed to her fathers in Allah. Even as he and the old Haggi he had brought to cure her looked on, she stretched her limbs, opened her eyes wide, closed her mouth and died as gracefully as she had lived.

And because he had loved Sahande so much, Kurguz Mehmet felt very lonely after her death. Because he thought of her so much, longing to hear again the patter of small feet around the hut, Kurguz went out in search of a wife only three moons after Sahande's death. Short widowhood proves that a man has been happy in his married life and has not been wishing that her death set him free.

He put on his best clothes, the largest blue

pantaloons with silver buckles below the knees and the *bournouz* furred with the finest astrakhan, covered his head with the tallest red fez, stocked his pockets with golden ducats, groomed his best horse and was up and about wife-hunting amongst his kinsmen in the Dobrudja marshes.

Three moons had come and gone and Kurguz had seen many women without finding the one he desired; but at the beginning of the fourth moon, when he had already bethought himself of returning home, he saw Yahde, the daughter of Osman Ali, he whose forefathers had once been Khans, and he decided to buy her as a wife.

Osman Ali received him with great honors, but when Kurguz stated his demand, the white-haired man did not even want to hear of parting with his daughter, Yahde. She was the crown of his life, she was his jewel, she was the joy of his old heart and many other things which he enumerated.

Kurguz stroked his black hair and closed his small eyes until they were no more than narrow slits under a protruding forehead and asked:

"How many ducats for the crown of your life, how many for the jewel, how many for the joy of your heart? Speak, Osman, for I have seen Yahde but once and I want her for a wife. The best has its price. And on top of all the ducats I shall bring you next year six of the best colts of my pasture, which you know that my worthy

forefathers have stocked with the finest blood that ever flowed in horseflesh."

For seven days and seven nights the two men dickered, but on the morning of the eighth day Osman called his daughter and told her that she was to become Kurguz's wife and, showing her all the gold her future husband had paid to get her, he said:

"You may rightly be proud, Yahde, for in all the history of the Dobrudja no more gold was ever paid for a wife."

But Yahde threw back her head in scorn and said:

"I don't want to be his wife. He is as old as my father would be were I his first-born instead of the last of his seed. Sander Suliman, who is young and beautiful, would pay just as many ducats for me and more besides, if I but said a word."

"Then Sander Suliman is too late," answered Osman. "You are the wife of Kurguz. He has paid for you. And because you speak as no *kadina* ever spoke to her father in presence of another man, you will depart with your husband ere the sun sets. The *imman* will perform the wedding ceremony at his house."

Yahde made for the door but was caught by the strong arm of Kurguz, who threw her on a divan and with the aid of her father tied her hands and feet. The two men watched over her,

smoking their *narghiles,* until the sun had set; then her father handed her over to Kurguz, who had mounted his horse. He sat the girl crosswise in front of him, encircled her with his left arm and the ride homeward began.

The long twilight of a hot summer evening had merged into night when Kurguz stopped to water his horse and moisten his own parched throat in a brook leisurely flowing on the side of the road. He put Yahde down on the wet moss and spoke to her:

"Yahde, my wife, must be thirsty."

The little Tartar girl looked at the man, reproaching him.

"You know that I have drunk nothing but my own tears since I first heard your voice."

Kurguz smiled as he brought water in his cupped palms. After she had emptied them twice, he untied her hands and allowed her to untie her feet. He repressed a wild desire to kiss the carmined fingers and the shapely little toes of her feet. For a long time the two looked at each other in silence. Then Yahde spoke:

"Why have you chosen me of all the girls you have seen?"

"Because you alone pleased me," he answered.

"You have paid six hundred ducats for a scratching, gnawing cat. You have made a bad bargain. Sell me to Sander Suliman. He will

give twice as much money as you have paid for me. Turn a bad bargain into a good one. You still have your chance. I will be like a she-wolf to you."

"That is good to hear," Kurguz answered, and his eyes glittered in the dark. "That is good to hear. For twenty years I have lived in one room with one that was a lamb. It will be well to have a she-wolf for a change."

They faced each other as Kurguz cut slices of bread that he smeared with honey. She bit into a piece once or twice with her small, sharp white teeth; then she put it away and spoke again to the man before her:

"I shall eat your bread and honey but never will I be your wife, Kurguz Mehmet. With six hundred ducats you could have bought yourself six wives, each one more beautiful than I am and each one willing to be your wife. You are not so old as to pay so much gold for a wife, Kurguz Mehmet.

"You shall never have peace while I am around. You have made a very bad bargain. My father, who is a better trader than you are, has tricked you. He knows that you will soon bring me back to him and then he will get more gold for me from Sander Suliman."

Then Kurguz said:

"For twenty years I have had peace in my home and Allah has thought it right to let me

have a wife who will keep me awake with her scolding. But I must tell you that Kurguz Mehmet is known as the 'Tamer of Wild Horses.' I have tamed the wildest horse in the Dobrudja. And after I have finished with him he has been as gentle as a lamb, eating from my hand and happy when I looked at him. And your father will wait longer than Allah lets him live if he intends waiting until I return you to him. Of Sander Suliman I know nothing and it is forbidden to speak ill of any man one has not seen with his own eyes."

Thus ended the first talk between bride and groom. Kurguz covered her with his *bournouz* as she folded her arms under her head and closed her tired eyes. Kurguz watched over her and the rest of the night he admired her beautiful limbs and proud head; he thought his hut would be much enlivened by the girl's presence.

The one thing he had always regretted about Sahande was her failure to give him issue. He hoped it would be different with Yahde and that his old days would see him with one or more sons at his side.

At the first awakening of the day Kurguz touched the arm of the sleeping girl and bade her get ready for the ride.

"Call your horse," she answered, as she knotted her loose hair.

At midday Kurguz had reached his home.

As Yahde had not yet been given away by the *imman,* she wore no veil and the men and women of Kurguz Mehmet's tribe came to the chief's hut to look at her. Kurguz had already related how he had paid six hundred ducats in gold for her, and as he was the best trader of the tribe they were sure to behold the most beautiful woman in God's creation.

They were rather taken aback to find her a sulking dust-covered little creature who turned her back to them. As was the custom, Kurguz's mother approached the girl to bid her welcome and to feel the hardness of her arm and the shape of her forehead.

But Yahde, who had been sitting listlessly, full of poisonous scorn, sprang to her feet at the old woman's touch and between her closed teeth said:

"Keep away from me. I am a daughter of Osman Ali and my forefathers have been Khans who lorded over all the Tartars in Allah's whole world and not horse-thieves; and on my mother's side, too, there have been Khans and not pack-horses. I am still Osman Ali's daughter and I shall never be Kurguz Mehmet's wife. I will be killed or die as Ali's daughter."

The women closed their ears to shut out the insults and the men looked at Kurguz Mehmet, not knowing what to do or say.

"She stands me six hundred ducats, *effendis,*

six hundred ducats in gold. And she is spirited like all thoroughbreds—but we like them that way, don't we, men? It gives us pride to be masters of such as she."

And as he laughed and joked the other men did likewise, as they were led to the door of the chief.

Alone with Yahde, Kurguz narrowed his bead-like eyes and sprang at her. But she had been expecting that. She stepped aside and he saw in her hand a dagger with a handle of mother-of-pearl.

"You have made a bad bargain, Kurguz Mehmet. You will never kiss me, never come near me, never have me, never, Kurguz."

The Tartar chief stroked his hair and he showed his teeth and grinned.

"The *imman* will come to-day to marry us. You had better get ready a veil from yonder white silk."

"That I will do, Kurguz; for I hate the shadow of your people's eyes on my face. Your women are ugly, your men are jackals and you I hate."

Kurguz left her alone and went out to his people. He found the men squatting on the grass, talking one to another.

Old Ketidge spoke up:

"Of course, Kurguz Mehmet, you are right in whatever you do. And it is well for the memory of Sahande that you sought to marry so

soon after her death. It is proof that she loved you and made you happy and therefore you desire a woman to take her place near you. But I, who am much older than you are, who have known the father of your father, know how untamed are the women of Osman Ali's house, and I fear for your peace, my son."

But Kurguz laughed as he squatted near the old man.

"Kurguz Mehmet has never yet made a bad bargain and she stands me six hundred ducats. Let the youngest of us go call the *imman* and let the women prepare the wedding feast."

The Tartars jumped to their feet and ran to their tents and huts, shouting:

"Kurguz Mehmet's wedding day! He weds the fairest daughter of the land. Has paid her weight in gold. Praise be to Allah."

The biggest kettle was hung on an iron triangle, a fire was built underneath and the youngest of the lambs were killed, skinned and the flesh—still warm—was thrown into the boiling water for the common feast.

To tend to the flesh-pot was the work of the men. Around a smaller kettle the women prepared the rice for the *pilaff*, talking and singing all the time, improvising songs about Yahde and Kurguz as they went along.

After the kettle was full with meat, old Ketidge began to sing the song of the Kurguz tribe.

At the end of each quatrain all the men joined in the chorus:

"Eagles proud and strong,
Each one of them.
Praise be to Allah,
Praise be to Allah."

And as the odor of the simmering food penetrated their nostrils, the men became intoxicated with joy and began to dance. At first their feet moved slowly around the fire but gradually the dance became faster and faster while the women clapped their hands and old Ketidge continued his song. At the end of each quatrain the dancers bowed their heads and bent their knees as they shouted:

"Eagles proud and strong,
Each one of them.
Praise be to Allah,
Praise be to Allah."

When Ketidge had finished his song, his voice was no louder than a whisper and even the youngest men were tired and sat down on the grass.

Then Kurguz threw his fez in the air, tightened his belt, bared his feet and began to dance and sing his own Odyssey in search of a wife. He related how he despaired of ever finding one until Yahde came before his eyes. He had thought himself an old man until he had seen

her. And of a sudden youth had come back to him.

Then he told about his dickerings with Osman Ali. How the old man had held out for a thousand ducats in gold on the first day and how he, Kurguz, had offered to pay him a thousand ducats if he could show him an equal sum in his possession:

"For we are the richest tribe and it is known that there are not two thousand ducats in gold in existence."

And then he told them how they tied her hands and feet and how he rode with her. As he related it, the ride homeward took on tremendous proportions, as if its duration had been twenty years and not as many hours. And now he was with them, home again, with his men and horses. Praise be to Allah, the Only One, and to Mohammed, who is his only prophet.

For two hours he danced and sang. The men listened to his every word, never interrupting him with a gesture or a sound. The women had retired a little farther lest the men speak things only for the ears of men. The youngsters had waited patiently in the stables until the last of Kurguz's song; then they appeared astride their horses, formed two circles, and began to ride slowly around the seated men, each circle riding in an opposite direction.

Slowly the pace was increased while the riders performed all sorts of tricks: some standing up on the saddles while others threw in the air curved swords, *yataghans* and daggers and caught them while their horses were in full gallop.

After this the riders surrounded Kurguz's tent and, singing the bridal song, they called upon Yahde to come out and show her face before the *imman* covered it with the veil:

"Come, daughter of Osman, and show your face, which makes the moon envious.
Come, daughter of Osman, and laugh that we may see your teeth, which are as beautiful as two rows of pearls.
Come, Yahde, daughter of Osman Ali, and show us your eyes, which shame the stars.
Come, daughter of Osman."

For a long time they sang as they rode around and around. Then Yahde came out. The young men shouted their greetings and continued to ride, excelling themselves in prowess as they passed in front of her.

But nothing astonished her. A scornful smile played over her lips as the most daring feats were performed. And when the sun had set and the *imman* had arrived, she hissed to the young men as she posed herself at the door of the hut:

"Was that your best? Old women of my people can do better than that. I see now why Kurguz Mehmet bought me for his wife. Your women

are ugly and even your young men are old hens and he wants to improve the blood of his tribe. But he shall not. I swear it shall be against my will and I shall die and not give him issue that his name may live with his people."

The young Tartars were outraged. They would have forgotten themselves and rent her to pieces but Kurguz Mehmet was behind the girl and shouted to them:

"She is like an unbroken colt, sons of my people. And what is the name by which I am known?"

"The tamer of wild horses," they shouted, as Yahde entered her hut, "the tamer of wild horses," and laughingly they returned galloping to the stables.

The old *imman,* accompanied by the *chiaoush* who served as his scribe and the young Tartar who had gone to call him, arrived on horseback just as the sun was setting.

After many of the older men had washed his feet and poured water from earthen gourds on his palms, that he might cool his face and clean his eyes, the *imman,* followed by most of the men, after leaving his *paputch* (shoes) outside the door, entered the bridal chamber. It was the same room Sahande had occupied and between midday and sunset the women had put the room in order.

They had piled the skins and furs high and had

covered the walls with colored silks and with green boughs they had cut from the trees. On narrow shelves over the doors and windows burning oil-wicks floated in colored glasses. In the middle of the room was the beautiful wedding rug of the tribe.

Kurguz, barefooted, in a white dolman and a green turban around his blood-red fez, was already there. His strong body looked even stronger in his wedding clothes. The *imman* begged them all be seated and then began the reading of the marriage contract from a long yellow parchment, a blank form which he filled in with names of the groom and bride and fathers and forefathers. Toward the end of the ceremony Yahde was ushered into the room, followed and surrounded by all the women of the tribe in gayly colored pantaloons.

"May she give him issue," they sang and shouted. "May she give him issue."

Hers was the only female face that was uncovered. A white veil, pinned to her hair, was hanging back of her head. The *imman* took her hand and led her to the wedding rug, as the *chiaoush* went on reading the marriage ceremonial and conditions of divorce.

"And how many ducats have you paid to her kin?" the scribe asked.

"Six hundred," answered Kurguz proudly.

"And how much have you agreed to pay to her

father, Osman Ali, should your desire be to return her to him to-day, to-morrow, after a year or ten?" the *chiaoush* continued in a droning voice.

"Six hundred times six hundred ducats," shouted Kurguz defiantly, as he looked at Yahde.

The *imman* looked at the Tartar in astonishment, while the droning scribe filled in the sum mentioned in the blank space of the parchment.

"And now, know, woman," the *chiaoush* turned to Yahde, "that if you give him no issue after ten years, you may, if so be then your will, return to your father, free to wed another man."

That ended the ceremony and Yahde's veil was thrown over her face by the oldest woman to hide it from the sight of any man but her husband.

Kurguz left the room to celebrate with the men and Yahde remained with the women.

The fire of green birches crackled, the black smoke rose to the starry heavens and the steam from the kettles enveloped the squatting men as they pulled pieces of meat from the boiling pot, while behind them the youngsters killed more lambs to go into the kettles.

The young girls sang and danced and gave the dark, naked little youngsters hot sweetened *pilaff* and large pieces of honey still in the comb.

A little later in the night, after the second prayers, smaller fires were built and groups gathered to listen to singers and flute-players

who sang and played sad, slow tunes, which the men repeated vocally without much attention to the key, each one also changing the rhythm to suit his mood.

At midnight the revelry ceased abruptly. At the call to midnight prayers the *imman* rose, bowed, touched the ground seven times with his forehead, gave his benediction to the bowing men and left the feast. The satiated Tartars rolled on their backs to sleep in the open.

The women went to their quarters. Kurguz left his shoes outside the door to Yahde's room. Only a few urchins still roamed around the kettle to eat the left-overs of the feast. After a while it was as quiet as if the night itself had fallen asleep.

Kurguz found Yahde seated on a heap of skins. She had lighted fresh tobacco on a *narghile* and was inhaling the cool smoke which had first passed through a jar of cold rose-water. She put the mouthpiece away as Kurguz entered. The mother-of-pearl-handled dagger was lying near her, close to her right hand.

"You need not fear me that way, Yahde, and daggers are no weapons against men like Kurguz Mehmet," he said, as he pointed to the dagger and squatted on his knees, facing her.

"I have left my foot-gear outside your door. It is not my pleasure to stop here to-night. But I have come to speak to you. I have come to

tell you that you cannot insult my people as you did before sundown. I am your husband now and the chief of the tribe. I have spoken."

Yahde looked at him as he faced her quietly, although she scented the tempest within him. His powerful face betrayed not the slightest emotion as he made ready to leave the room after a few puffs at the narghile.

"You have made a bad bargain, Kurguz Mehmet. You will lose your money. Sander Suliman will come and take me away from here," Yahde called after him.

"If I have made a bad bargain, it is not for my wife to speak about it. May Allah be merciful to you in your sleep," and Kurguz left the room without another word.

In the following days the Tartar chief paid little attention to his wife. Yahde watched him going and coming. She took notice of the supreme lordship he enjoyed over his own people. His every word was law; his gesture, command. His quiet dignity lent power to his every word.

She noticed the economy of movement and the tremendous energy he displayed in the breaking in of young colts and the alertness and responsiveness of his muscles when in action.

She expected him to assert his rights as a husband and never yet had she been once in his presence without having her dagger close at hand.

But Kurguz was away with his men the whole

day and when he entered his room at all in the evening, it was to take a few puffs from the *narghile* before going to sleep in his section of the hut. He seldom spoke to her at all and when he did, it was only to warn her against drinking too much water, because of the fall fevers, and to instruct her in the use of certain herbs for flavoring the *pilaff*.

As she had insulted the women of the tribe, they avoided her until the time when she would greet them properly in Allah's name. A few weeks after she had been taken from her father's house, Yahde began to forget her dagger when Kurguz entered the room. And as he left it without ever speaking to her, much less making love to her, Yahde's fears of the man changed into uneasiness as to her own charm.

Why, he had paid six hundred ducats in gold for her and she was as nothing to him! Had she lost her beauty? She wanted him to give her an occasion to fight for her liberty of choice. He did not give her the occasion.

She surprised herself by thinking more of Kurguz than of Sander Suliman. Sander was young and beautiful but he was not half as strong as Kurguz. How Kurguz could ride! How a horse seemed to grow smaller and smaller when he rode it! Even the horses seemed to know that he was the supreme master.

Once, while he was away during the day, she

entered his section of the hut and inspected his clothes. They were heavy and ample and the finely spun red silk sashes were wide and long. Then another and another day passed and Kurguz never gave her occasion to think of the dagger. In the first days she had spoken to him about selling her back to Sander Suliman, but now she no longer mentioned the boy's name.

She was at first grateful to Kurguz for his behavior, but after a few weeks his negligence became an insult. She would have liked him to assert himself. She still hoped he would. She would defend herself, of course. But he was so powerful, his arms so strong and his shoulders were so wide.

But no. She was as nothing to him. And he had paid six hundred ducats of gold. Had he seen a more beautiful one?

And then one day a terrible longing came upon her to run away, to run back to her village, to her father, to Sander Suliman, to men who fawned upon her, who watched her every step.

She waited for the right moment, when Kurguz was busy; then she saddled his horse and started homeward. After the horse had spent his first wind galloping at top speed, Yahde turned around, expecting Kurguz behind her. But the road was clear and she heard not a single

hoof beat as she listened with an ear to the ground.

"It's good," she thought. "He has not noticed my absence yet. This gives me two hours."

Two hours later, as she gave the horse his second rest, there was still no sign or sound of any one pursuing her.

"By this time," she thought, "he must have noticed that the horse is missing."

And she listened and looked, full of expectancy. Before she had given the horse his third rest she longed for Kurguz to come and compel her to return with him. But she was as nothing to him. Six hundred ducats in gold and he cared not whether she stayed with him or not. Surely, should he still want her, he would have overtaken her long ago.

She lessened the speed of the horse under her and the farther the distance between herself and Kurguz was increased, the stronger was her wish to be in his hut again.

Once she thought she had heard hoof beats a stone's throw behind her and she increased the pace of her horse. He would not have her without a struggle. Yet, after she had ridden half an hour at full gallop and turned around, she heard nothing but the echo of the hoof-beats of her own horse.

No, he cared not for her; otherwise she would

not ride alone now. She rode the whole day, and before the moon had come up she recognized the path to her village. But her heart did not leap with joy to be so near Sander Suliman.

Yahde threw herself down on the wet ground, buried her face in the moss and cried: "He does not care. He does not care."

When the last fire had died away, she entered her father's village.

Early the following morning the whole tribe knew that Yahde had returned to her home and it also became known that she wore no veil, which was a sign that she was as yet Osman Ali's daughter. Sander Suliman came to see her.

"Oh, Yahde, my proud one!" he exclaimed.

But she would let him say nothing further.

"You know what will happen now," Yahde spoke to the boy, "Kurguz Mehmet will come with his men and they will fight for me."

"Let him come," answered Sander Suliman; "he will find us ready for him."

"I shall not say a word against Kurguz Mehmet," answered Yahde's father. "He has paid for her. Let him come for her. But if you defeat him and his men, she will be, like the other women of his tribe, spoils of war. I have spoken."

Yahde had run away from her husband. If

the tribe chose to defend her, only force could wrest her from them. And the Kurguzs were not loved by the Osmanlis.

Sander Suliman assembled the men of the village. They left plow and field, drove the oxen to the corrals and in a few minutes each one of them was on horseback, armed to the teeth and ready to fight. Old blunderbusses clicked with unsheathed long swords of all makes, and *yataghans* and long daggers were sharpened with oil stones even as the horses pranced around. Short-barreled shotguns and long-barreled pistols were stuck in the wide belts and heavy axes were fastened to the saddles.

The women and the children, all those unable to fight, surrounded the warriors, shouted advice and yelled and cursed. Shots were fired to try out the firearms and the men swung their glistening white weapons to try their balance, and the grip of the handles. Then, when all was ready, the two hundred or more riders swung around and with Sander Suliman at their head they rode seven times around Osman Ali's hut, yelling their vows to defend Yahde from that old horse-thief, Kurguz Mehmet, who did not even know how to keep a wife after he had paid six hundred ducats in gold for her. And who is not worthy to keep her is not worthy to have her. Such was the law.

Suliman led the men to the head of the road leading toward Kurguz Mehmet's village, and

there they camped to wait for the Tartar chief to come and claim his run-away bride. They laughed and made all sorts of allusions to the fact that Yahde as yet wore no veil, as they lighted fires and sang and danced to pass the time. The whole day they waited and when the sun had set, there had been no sign of Kurguz Mehmet and his men.

"That horse-thief will fall upon us in the dead of night," some one said, and the Tartars with Sander Suliman camped in the open around the fire.

Patrols were sent out as advance guards, but they returned reporting there was no sign of the enemy. In her hut Yahde waited anxiously for Kurguz Mehmet to come and fight for her. She was sure that he would defeat them. He was so powerful, so strong, so adroit. But the whole day and the whole night had passed and there was no sign of his coming.

"He does not care. He does not care," she cried, as the hours went by.

The Osmans still camped on the road, sang, danced, shrieked and shot their firearms in contests, but the Kurguzs did not come to give them battle.

"He is afraid to come," said Sander Suliman proudly, as he spoke to Yahde through the lowered lattices of the window of her room.

A bitter laugh was her answer. Kurguz afraid!

How little they knew him. He could fight them all single-handed. She was sure of that. Only he did not care for her. She was as nothing to him. He cared nothing for her. He cared still less for the six hundred ducats in gold.

The whole village was up and about for days and days, excitedly expecting the big fight, and, as nothing happened, Yahde felt that she would become the butt of ridicule. And even Sander Suliman would think less of her now. A woman whose husband does not even want to come and fight for her!

She knew how Kurguz could fight if he wanted. She had seen him throw oxen as if they were lambs. And Sander looked so small and puny when compared to Kurguz. Suliman was loud-mouthed and his gestures were without decision and without wide sweep. How could she ever have thought that she loved him?

And lo, when Yahde had given up all hope that Kurguz might ever come and do her the honor to demand her return, to fight for her, one morning Kurguz Mehmet, afoot and without a firearm, knocked at Osman Ali's door.

At the sight of him Yahde's heart leaped for joy one moment and was frozen still the next. He had come on foot, alone and without firearms.

Yahde's father wished the visitor peace unto

Allah as he poured water from a gourd that Kurguz Mehmet might wash his hands before entering the house.

While the two men squatted on the rug and were politely inquiring about each other's health and well-being, Yahde was hidden behind a curtain to listen to what they said.

After what seemed interminable hours for Yahde, during which the two men studied each other's face, Kurguz Mehmet said:

"Osman Ali, I have come for my horse. The horse on which Yahde has come back to you."

"It's in the stable, Kurguz Mehmet," her father answered.

"Then I shall leave presently, remembering your hearty welcome, Osman Ali."

Kurguz Mehmet, followed by Yahde's father, entered the stable, rubbed his horse's nose as he spoke a few words to it and swung on its back as soon as he had led the animal outside.

But the horse had barely gone a dozen paces when Yahde, with veil over her face, had wound her arms around Kurguz's bare leg and crying loud enough for all to hear, she begged:

"Of my own free will, Kurguz Mehmet, tamer of wild horses, of my own free will, thou mightiest of the mighty, take me to your bosom or I shall die by my own hand."

Kurguz lifted her veil and looked sharply into Yahde's eyes; then he helped her up beside him

and the horse galloped away, while the men of Osman's village, with Sander Suliman at their rear, returned to their labors, leading their horses and carrying the muskets barrel downward, humiliated, defeated by an unarmed man.

TINKA

On the shores of the Rumanian Danube, right at the foot of the Dobrudja mountains, there lived a tribe of gypsy musicians. Their fame spread far over villages and hamlets and no marriage feast or celebration of any kind was considered possible without the presence of at least one of Kosta's band. Kosta himself, the leader, played only on rare occasions, at the feasts of the rich Boyars, at their weddings, at the birth of their children.

Kosta was a very proud man. He had a very high opinion of himself, his art and his importance and behaved in a manner befitting such a high personage. His black wavy hair was always well oiled and sleek, his ear-rings were of the purest gold and his picturesque clothes, blue pants and embroidered white shirt hanging over the belt, were always clean and fresh as though just from the tailor. His tremendous strength and catlike suppleness added to the man's self-confidence, giving him the appearance of a true King of his tribe. His word was law. His slightest wish a holy command. Kosta had two sons and one daughter. Yorga, the oldest, a

boy of about twenty, played the flute, and Mena, two years his junior, played the cymbal, a sort of zither with a greater sonority and wider range of tone. Usually the womenfolk of the gypsies are not musicians, but Kosta's daughter, Tinka, was an exception. She had secretly practiced the violin, and at the age of ten she surprised the whole tribe with a feat they will never forget. It happened thus:

During the day the whole tribe took part in a joyous feast to the genii of spring. The flask of brandy was refilled many times, and at nightfall they all slept round the camp-fire or had been dragged by their women into the huts.

Kosta tried to sleep, but in vain. A few days before he had been insulted by one of the Boyars and this had embittered him so that no amount of brandy could offset his anger and hatred. This thought lay coiled up in his savage heart. It wriggled like a serpent and poisoned his mind, it stole his peace, his sleep. Yet he could not lighten his burden with an oath, or a curse. He could not complain to his tribe. He was the leader. He had nobody to whom to complain.

Kosta could not sleep; he rose from his cot and entered the forest at the back of the house; there he unburdened himself to the trees and the crescent moon; unburdened his heart of all the rust that was eating his life. There was no connected sentence or oath. He roared like a lion, occasion-

ally howling out the name of his insulter. Then he kicked the trunks of the trees and stamped the ground. Needing sympathy, he kissed the bark and cried himself to sleep with his arms wound around an old oak. For many hours he slept on his feet. The barking of the dogs from the near-by village woke him. Soothed, he reëntered the hut and tried his cot, but he was soon again on his feet. Kosta took his violin, and sitting on a tree stump he let the bow wander erratically over the strings. To the Danube and the moon and the trees he played. Nay, he let the Danube and the trees and the moon play a song on his violin, his bow flying as though driven by a magic power. Sounds, ethereal and transparent rose and filled the air. Between a dance of fairies and elfs there came a voluptuous song, as though the Danube herself were singing her swan song. Kosta knew nothing. His eyes were closed and his soul was in higher spheres whence no one descends with a consciousness of what has happened. As Kosta played, his son, the cymbalist, came and sat down near his father. Soon, haunting chords accompanied the melody of violin. Then came the other son, Mena, and filled in the harmony with his flute. Shortly the whole tribe was sitting around the leader, each one cautiously and consciously playing the improvised symphony of the gods.

Tinka, Kosta's daughter, who was then only

ten years old, sat near her father and when the violin glided out of the man's grip she took it up and continued what he had started. They all listened. One by one they stopped playing. Only from a guitar there rose a sound at the fall of a cadenza. From out the violin sang a world of angels and from each mouth poured a stream of rubies, *smaragds* and topazes. Each man's life was played from before the cradle until after the grave. Each joy, each sorrow, each hidden hope, each desire was accentuated, and as they heard her play Yorga discovered that it was not Marta but Eliza that he really loved, and Marcu knew that he had falsely accused his wife of infidelity and Joana know that she loved Stan. Estranged friends crept near to one another and clasped hands and kissed. Old hatreds were strengthened or were wiped out. Streams of passionate songs poured forth: songs of wine, or tears, of kisses and of death.

Slowly the moon crept from under the mountains and stood still to listen. The trees bent lower and even the river stopped its murmuring to listen and broaden its life. Then suddenly Tinka started a dance, a joyous, glorious, tripping dance, and they all rose, arms locked with arms, and danced. And the river, the trees, the moon, the stars and the mountains—everything —danced madly until the first rays of the sun lit the sharp shores of the Danube. Then Tinka

fell into a faint, while the violin still echoed the sounds of her divine inspiration.

From that day on Tinka was considered the Goddess of the tribe. As she grew older she played with even more fire and abandon. Her fame spread over the whole district and each member of the community of gypsies grew in importance. Kosta became unapproachable, and though he was asked several times to bring his daughter with him when he played at a feast he refused steadfastly.

"Tinka plays only for us," he would explain, emphasizing the *us* with great pride. "She does not have to play for *pay*."

All the same nearly all the people had heard her play as they strolled on the shores or cooled themselves under the trees. Tinka herself was petted and cuddled. She had rings of gold and platinum and precious stones of all colors and ear-rings of all kinds, pendants and studs and *salbias* and bracelets and diadems and necklaces of pearls and emeralds. Her dresses were of the best silks and of all colors. Each day added something to her trunk and jewel box. Yet all this did not make her happy. She had a sad soul. She played with her jewels and found no joy. She fingered and crumpled the frippery and her heart ached.

Thus the young gypsy girl grew to maiden-

hood, petted and spoiled, yet neglected because they loved her too much. The boys, considering her a holy being, dared not love her. Those upon whom her desires were fixed married girls on the same plane as themselves. All hints the maiden gave of her love, love of woman to man, were always misinterpreted, beatified.

Tinka! Who could think of marrying the Madonna! Tinka! Who has ever seen the girl can never forget her. Her olive-hued oval face, lit by two almond-shaped, dark moist eyes; her red lips; the two rows of white pearls, like two verses of a divine poem, she showed when she spoke. In her thick black hair always nestled a red rose in the summer and an evergreen sprig in the winter. Her arms, her neck, her shoulders, her bosom, a divine revelation. A creature born from the embrace of Venus and Apollo.

Tinka! Who ever heard her speak! Blessed the one who has heard her sing!

On a late autumn evening, Radu, the son of the Boyar, walked through the forest with his sister, Marya. He had been absent from home for the last five years, studying in Germany. And the sister had so many questions to ask about this far-away country that she gave her brother no peace, but followed him about from early morn until night.

As they crossed the road, the young Boyar stood still, seizing his sister's arm.

"Who is playing?"

"Tinka," the girl answered. "Tinka, Kosta's daughter."

Radu stood riveted to the ground. From near the river came a melody that carried in its breath all the sorrows of the world, as though the voice came from the Danube, from the spirit of the mountains and the trees. Broad and full the melody came in large measures, like the verses of the prophets of old, like milk from a healthy mother's round breasts.

Radu listened. He himself played the violin and knew what he was hearing. Then, when the playing had ceased, he asked his sister to guide him to the camp of the musicians.

They were soon there. Around a fire sat the whole tribe, men, women and children, their dark faces gleaming in the light of the flames. No one moved. Their souls were borne away to other regions, to other loves, of the past and of the future. Kosta was the first to see the young Boyar and his sister. At his word they all rose and approached the young master respectfully. Only Tinka still sat in the grass, the violin in her lap.

"Who played the violin so beautifully?" Radu asked.

"Tinka," Kosta answered; "my Tinka," he

added with pride. Then turning around he called: "Tinka, Tinkala, come here."

At her father's call the girl roused herself and approached. Tinka and Radu looked only once into each other's eyes, then they simultaneously bent their heads. The moon stood priestlike, anointing them in eternal love. No word was exchanged.

Tinka returned to the fire and Radu went with his sister, but their souls had touched and remained entwined.

Radu took his sister home and tried to sleep, but in vain. He felt a burning desire to see the gypsy girl, to hear her voice, to feel her physical nearness. Several times he put out the candle and closed his eyes, but the instant he did so he heard Kosta call out:

"Tinka, Tinkala, come here," and the girl came, looked up at him and bent her head.

The young Boyar mentally reënacted the scene time after time, each time with more intensity, continuing it to a different conclusion. . . . Tinka comes up and winds her arm round his neck and kisses him full on the mouth. His sister flees in horror, and he—he does not care, he remains there. The whole tribe is against him. Soon they approach him menacingly with sticks and stones. Kosta at the head of them all.

But he, Radu, will not let her go. She nestles so close to him.

"Take me with you—my love," she whispers. He retreats with her in his arms, to the forest. They pursue him. The forest is full of wolves. The animals approach him. The wild eyes gleam and glisten, and from the red tongues trickle blood. They are a big pack—they come howling. Tinka is so afraid that she lies limp in his arms. He retreats back to the camp, and when at the edge of the wood all the gypsies surround them and laugh at them. Their eyes gleam, too, their tongues also trickle blood. Their heads are wolfish—wolves heads on human bodies. Kosta's head is the most terrible of all. He approaches with set teeth. Radu wants to run away, but his feet are glued to the burning soil. . . .

Towards morning he fell asleep with a well-defined plan as to how he would obtain the love of the girl. He even decided henceforth to lead the life of a wandering gypsy. They would both wander—he and Tinka.

When the young Boyar and his sister left, Tinka listened to their departing steps. She heard the echo of a laugh and bit her lips with anger.

"Is he laughing at me?" But she soon quieted

down, feeling that it was the sister, not the young man, who had laughed, and she, too, dreamed of a thousand pleasant things in connection with the Boyar's son. Again she took up her violin, but she did not play long. She put the instrument aside and threw herself into her father's arms, petted and kissed and called him endearing names. She played with his long mustache and stroked his beard and gray hair.

"Oh, Papa—paplic." Then she suddenly left the camp and went to her bed, where she lay awake part of the night thinking of him—of the strange man.

Towards morning she fell asleep with the hope that she would see him during the day. She *must* see him—he was *hers*. Hers by the decision of the moon and the stars and the skies, under whose canopy the knot had been tied.

When she arose the sun was high in the heavens. The men were all gone about their business. It was Sunday and they had calls to play at festivities. The women were busy round the house.

Tinka dressed in her best, put on all her jewels, and, jumping on her favorite horse, she trotted up the road. At the edge of the river she let the horse free to pasture and entered the forest.

Soon she heard a horse's neigh. Seized with fright, she started to run.

"Tinka, Tinkuza," rang a sweet voice from among the trees. The gypsy girl stood still. Her bosom heaved with emotion. She knew who was calling. It was he——

She felt two lips sealing love on her neck, on her bare shoulders, on her face. She released herself and looked for one long minute into the eyes of the young Boyar—looked earnestly and almost sternly. Then she gave herself to his arms—all the joys of earthly passion were theirs in this moment of sublime abandon. She needed no ceremony, no priest, no law, no Bible. She was as free as the trees, as the waves of the Danube, as the wind, as the birds. She was Tinka—the free child of a free race, a race unfettered by the intricacies of civilization. The only race that has not entered into the crucible of the world and become part of its alloy.

For the next few months the two lovers met nightly at the same spot. When every one was asleep the young gypsy girl would watch for the signal: the howling of a wolf. When she heard it she would stealthily quit the hut and was soon in her lover's arms.

Her playing was now even more brilliant than before. There was so much young joy in her melodies, the rhythm was so lively that even the

old men and the old women of the tribe became rejuvenated and sang and danced.

The whole neighborhood wondered why the gypsies had become so lively. They attributed it to a greater quantity of brandy, though the truth was that the gypsies now seldom used any liquors. They did not need it. Even those who were addicted to drink and sorrowful moods dropped both. Their playing was more intense, and the fame of the tribe spread far over the plains and mountains and across the Danube. Through mysterious channels news spread of Tinka's witchery, of her bewitching melodies, and many were the Boyars who offered handfuls of golden money to Kosta to bring his daughter with him. Tinka grew proud in her happiness. Love colored her cheeks, heightened her spirits, made her audacious, playful, bold. She looked like a woman now, and many of the boys subtly changed their former sentiments towards her. It was love they now offered and not reverential worship. But Tinka remained faithful to her Radu.

The young gypsies fought bloody battles among themselves and Kosta had to drive away with his fist many an insistent wooer. No one knew of her love for the Boyar. Tinka herself had never given a thought as to the outcome of it all. Was she not happy? What more did she want?

On a certain night she waited in vain to hear the signal. The wolf did not howl. Then the next night and the night after passed, and from the forest came no call. Worried, Tinka wended her way towards the Boyar's palace to obtain news. She now remembered that recently his embrace had not been as fervent as before, his lips had been cold, his face drawn.

"He is sick," she thought. "I loved him too much."

She met a house servant on the road, inquired, and was told that the young Boyar had gone far, far away with the train, to the land of the Francs. It was like the blow of a sledge hammer. She fell unconscious to the ground and was carried home.

All winter she lay in bed, most of the time in a high fever and delirium. She raved about the wolf who no longer called. No one suspected the reason of her sudden illness. The old women of the camp, who had always considered her a superhuman being, now thought that Beelzebub was exacting his due for all the gifts he had showered upon her before. So they prayed to the moon and melted lead and cut off the head of a bat with a new horseshoe and killed the black cat when the cock crew on the first day of the moon. To no avail. Tinka still raved.

"The wolf does not howl to-night, and he will never, never howl to call me."

Thus Tinka passed the whole winter. Her youth, however, carried her past the dark door of the unknown, and when spring came, when the first boughs greened, the sap of life returned to her veins. Tinka grew stronger every day. When the snow had all melted, her heart was again pulsating. One morning, as she sat in front of the hut and drank in the rays of the sun, meanwhile combing her hair, Marcu, Stan's son, passed.

"Hello, Tinka," he called, "are you feeling better now?"

He stopped and looked at her. He loved her. Tinka knew it. She raised her eyes and looked into his beautiful, strong face.

"Sit down near me, here, Marcu." She made room for him. "I feel better now. Marcu, I have been very ill."

"Yes, Tinka, we all thought you would die. I was very sorry—you know——"

"Did Sava marry, Marcu?"

"Yes, she married Giza."

"Did Mirta marry?"

"Yes, she married Pietro."

And one after another Tinka asked about all the girls until she found out that Marcu was the only one of her former admirers who had remained constant. Marcu rose to go.

"Don't hurry, boy; I like to speak with you," Tinka stopped him.

They sat together until late in the afternoon. As Tinka grew stronger she would take walks, leaning on the stalwart young gypsy's arm. One afternoon they walked up to the river. The girl sat down on the grass, while Marcu threw stones into the water. He threw them slowly at first, then he increased his speed, and finally he was wildly throwing them by handfuls and became impatient when he could not find a handful ready near him. Tinka combed her hair and smiled softly to herself. She understood his fury. It was his declaration of love. When he became tired he turned round, looked at her; she smiled back—she accepted his love.

At sunset they were both in the forest. She leaned on his arm and he sang and whistled and jerked his limbs wildly. She had almost forgotten Radu, but when they passed the big oak tree where she was wont to meet the young Boyar, her wound opened afresh. All in vain did Marcu call her to him. Tinka leaned against the tree and wept hysterically. Disgusted, Marcu left her there. "She is crazy," he told his mother.

Late at night the girl returned to her hut and took up her violin. She played mournful songs, dirges, broken by wild calls. The whole camp wept with her. They all grew sad. The old ones wished they were dead; the young ones seemed to turn gray; the sucklings turned from the mothers' breast—the milk was sour.

Daily Tinka played mournful songs, dirges, broken by wild calls. At night she would go and weep by the old oak tree near which she had met the young Radu, the Boyar's son.

The old women again pronounced incantations to the full moon; lead was melted and thrown in the cup from which Tinka drank. The neighbor's black cat was killed and its intestines buried with a few curls of the girl's hair. All in vain. Beelzebub kept her in his power.

Thus the summer passed. Tinka lost her grip on the people. She did not play as before. Neither was she ill. She became an "everybody," like all the rest. No one inquired where she was going or what she was doing. Even the old witches did not bother about her any more. Her father grumbled now that she was not performing her tasks. He scolded her once or twice on account of poor meals. She did not feel offended about it. She was listless—one of the herd.

At the dances the boys teased her for behaving like an old woman. Marcu married Ivan's daughter, Kosiza, "the veal," as they called her.

Autumn came. The harvest was done. The farmers drank with their men, paid them off at the inn. Some of the musicians were seated on a table outside on the green, and the men danced and sang.

"Here is to next year's harvest," shouted one of the farmers, glass in hand.

"Hurrah!" they all yelled, with glasses full of new red wine.

"To next year's harvest! Play away, you cursed *tziganes!* Play away, or I'll soak your violin in yon barrel." And they danced and sang.

Across the courtyard stood a girl churning butter. Her sleeves were rolled up high and her bare, brown arms were white with cream as high as the elbows. A few drops of milk were spattered on her black eyebrows. Her full, red lips were spread wide in laughter. She churned and laughed, churned and sang.

Tinka passed by. The girl called her: "Tinka, come here."

They both talked of next Sunday's dance, the great harvest dance.

"Put on your best, Tinka. The Boyar will be there, the Boyar and his daughter and his son."

"What? Who?" Tinka stammered out.

"The Boyar and his daughter and his son Radu," the girl repeated, churning ahead and thinking of her new white dress.

Tinka spoke no more. She ran home and cried until late into the night.

"Why are you crying?" asked her father.

"A toothache," she lied, so as to be allowed to cry some more. Towards the morning she went out to the big old oak. She knew for sure that

Radu would not be there, but the big old tree, with his cracked brown bark, looked so human that the girl had long since taken him into her confidence.

"Oak, I have given him all I had. My heart, my love, my soul, my body. Father, you have been witness to all. Have I ever refused any of his pleasures? Have I not been loving enough? Have I not been good enough? You know all he demanded. You know that I have given him all. You listened to us, and when I wanted to say 'no,' you shook that big branch of yours, and the leaves whispered, 'say yes.' Oh! I am not sorry—but why did he leave me? Tell me. What else could I have given him and I have not done so? Tell me. How else could I have loved him? I have but one heart, one soul, one body. It all belongs to him. Why has he spurned me? Why am I alone now, here? Why has he not been waiting for me here?"

Thus spoke Tinka, Kosta's daughter—daughter of the open field and the honest forest, of the outspoken mountain and the flowing river. And the old oak knew not what to answer, for the ways of men were unknown to him. He had feared only their ax until now, but from Tinka he learned that they have yet more powerful weapons—weapons with which to destroy their own kind.

In front of the inn, on Sunday afternoon, the big harvest dance took place. On a scaffold were seated all the musicians. Under the shading trees tables were set, laden with rough wooden pitchers of all colors. The old people, the ones too old to dance, sat and talked and sang. They were dressed in their best clothes. White flowing pants with a wide red belt—belts sometimes as high as the armpits. On the embroidered shirt shone many a medal won on the battle field, and an empty sleeve told an eloquent story. The young people danced the rainbow dance in the open space between the musicians and the watchers. The colors of the dresses were so different that several sets of rainbow dancers were lined up, one in front of the other. One of the boys commanded the movements and at his order every dancer had to bring his girl to the right place according to the prismic colors of the rainbow. The one who failed had to give a hostage, later to be redeemed with so many pitchers of wine. Wine! Oh, what wine! A continuous stream from three barrels, as though the sweet juice was eager to leave its dark prison, anxious to give joy and forgetfulness and hope.

From under a tree Tinka watched the spectacle eagerly. She was dressed in her best clothes. Two colored pieces of silk, one in front, one in the back, kept together by a belt studded with colored *flitters,* covered the lower part of

her body. A white shirt with open front, under a blue sleeveless *bournouz,* much the same as the Spanish bolero. A red rose in her hair and all her jewels, rings, necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, all she had, gold, silver, copper.

She was very pale, but her eyes shone with intense passion—passion half love, half hatred. She could kiss, and she might kill. She could give her life, and she might take a life. It was another Tinka, not the Tinka of the oak tree, nor the playing Tinka, nor the loving Tinka. It was the insulted woman.

She watched and saw the Boyar's carriage coming. A joyous shout rose from the assembled crowd. A table was cleared and the master was placed at the head, the daughter next to him on his right, and on the left another fair lady, to whom Radu paid constant attention.

The music ceased and the Boyar drank to the health of all. There were shouts and yells. Tinka came out from under the tree and sat herself in front of Radu. He caught her eye, but looked away, with no sign of recognition. Indeed, he was unmoved by her presence. Tinka trembled with rage.

"I am forgotten," she thought.

They danced again, and Tinka, too, danced with them. Not once did Radu look up. He was busy with his lady.

"Forgotten."

The wine and dance raised the spirits of all. Tinka's playing was remembered and they all shouted:

"Let Kosta's daughter play for us." Kosta frowned, but Tinka was willing. She took her father's violin, went to the other end of the table, in front of the Boyars, and played. Awestruck, the peasants held their breath. It was not a violin which produced those sounds. It was the heart of God and angels that poured an endless flow of melody, gay and mournful, praying and pagan, tender and savage. Life streamed from the bow. Radu became uneasy at first. He looked up and felt her hot glance. Her steady look riveted him. He spoke to the other woman, but he thought of the nights beneath the oak now.

"Why," he thought, "it was all gone, and now it bleeds again—the old wound. How can I? She is only a gypsy girl."

"Radu, you are distracted," the other woman remonstrated. He stammered an excuse and paid her the polite attentions required. Tinka lowered her violin and sang. He had never heard her sing before. She sang and looked at him:

"I had a heart; he trod upon it;
I had a soul; he tore it out.
He kissed away my youth, my joy,
He kissed away my youth, my joy,

Under the tree,
The big old oak.
At night he howled like a wolf,
And I came quickly to his den."

Yet no one seemed to understand to whom all this was directed. It was one of Tinka's songs, one of Tinka's beautiful songs and nothing more. It did break up the festival, because Radu grew very ill on account of the bad wine the cursed Jew dared to serve, and they went home earlier than usual from such occasions.

The days that followed were indeed very dark ones for Tinka. She had to listen to her father's and all the rest of the band's practicing of new songs for the wedding of the Boyar's son. It seemed as though every one knew her pain and wanted to take revenge for some wrong; this was the only explanation Tinka could give to their persistent playing. And every stroke of the bow ripped her wound open.

The night of the wedding the Boyar's carriage came and all the musicians clambered in and began playing joyous songs before the wagon started to move. Tinka remained all alone. This loneliness was a great relief at first; she was at last relieved from the playing of her father's men. But no sooner did she quiet down when the horrible pain started afresh. "Radu, why did you leave me?" Tinka screamed aloud. "Why did you leave me, and why don't you call

me to you?" But only the wind and the rain answered her cry. For hours, well into the night, Tinka cried. In her great sorrow she tore her own flesh. Then she suddenly became very quiet and attentive. Was it possible? Breathlessly she waited to hear again. Yes, the old signal; the wolf's howl. Tinka opened the door of the hut and listened again. Yes, it was the signal. "I am coming, Radu," and the gypsy girl disappeared in the forest.

There was no Tinka at home when her father returned the next night from the Boyar's son's wedding.

But when the searching party was deep in the forest they found her shoes and a few bones—all the hungry wolves had left of Tinka.

Still nobody understood—except Radu, who roams about the roads at night, howling like a wolf.

FANUTZA

Light and soft, as though the wind were blowing the dust off the silver clouds that floated overhead, the first snow was falling over the barren lands stretching between the Danube and the Black Sea. A lowland wind, which had already hardened and tightened the marshes, was blowing the snow skywards. The fine silvery dust, caught between the two air currents, danced lustily, blown hither and thither until it took hold of folds and rifts in the frozen land and began to form rugged white ridges that stretched in soft silvery curves to meet other growing mountains of snow. The lowland wind, at first a mere breeze playfully teasing the north wind, like a child that kicks the bed-sheets before falling asleep, increased its force and swiftness, and scattered huge mountains of snow, but the steadily rising drone of the north wind soon mastered the situation. Like silver grain strewn by an unseen hand, the snow fell obliquely in steady streams over the land. A great calm followed. The long Dobrudgean winter had started. In the dim steady light, in the wake of the great calm,

traveling towards the Danube from the Black Sea, the *Marea Neagra,* four gypsy wagons, each drawn by four small horses, appeared on the frozen plains. The caravan was brought to a standstill within sight of the slowly moving river. The canvas-covered wagons ranged themselves, broadwise, in a straight line with the wind. Between the wagons enough space was allowed to stable the horses. Then, when that part of the business had been done, a dozen men, in furs from head to toe, quickly threw up a canvas that roofed the temporary quarters of the animals and gave an additional overhead protection from the snow and wind to the dwellers of the wheeled homes.

While the unharnessing and quartering of the horses and the stretching of the canvas roof proceeded, a number of youngsters jumped down from the wagons, yelling and screaming with all the power of their lusty lungs. They threw snowballs at one another as they ran, some in search of firewood and others, with wooden pails dangling from ends of curved sticks over the left shoulder, in search of water for the horses and for the cooking pots of their mothers.

Soon afterwards, from little crooked black chimneys that pointed downwards over the roofs of the wagons, thick black smoke told that the fires were already started. The youngsters came back; those with the full water pails marching erectly with legs well apart; the ones with

bundles of firewood strapped to their shoulders leaning forward on knotted sticks so as not to fall under the heavy burden.

When everything had been done, Marcu, the tall, gray-bearded chief, inspected the work. A few of the ropes needed tightening. He did it himself, shaking his head in disapproval of the way in which it had been managed. Then he listened carefully to the blowing of the wind and measured its velocity and intensity. He called to his men. When they had surrounded him, he spoke a few words. With shovels and axes they set energetically to work, at his direction packing a wall of snow and wood from the ground up over the axles of the wheels all around the wagons so as to give greater solidity to the whole and to prevent the cold wind from blowing underneath.

By the time the early night settled over the marshes, the camp was quiet and dark. Even the dogs had curled up near the tired horses and had gone to sleep.

Early the following morning the whole thing could not be distinguished from one of the hundreds of mountains of snow that had formed overnight. After the horses had been fed and watered, Marcu, accompanied by his daughter, Fanutza, left the camp and went riverward, in search of the hut of the Tartar whose flat-bottomed boat was moored on the shore. Marcu

knew every inch of the ground. He had camped there with his tribe twenty winters in succession. He sometimes arrived before, and at other times after, the first snow of the year. But every time he had gone to Mehmet Ali's hut and asked the Tartar to row him across the Danube, on the old Rumanian side, to buy there fodder for the horses and the men; enough to last until after the river was frozen tight and could be crossed securely with horses and wagon. He had always come alone to Mehmet's hut, therefore the Tartar, after greeting Marcu and offering to do what his friend desired, inquired why the girl was beside the old chief.

"But this is my daughter, Fanutza, Mehmet Ali," Marcu informed.

"Who, Fanutza? She who was born here fourteen winters ago on the plains here?"

"The same, the same, my friend," Marcu answered, as he smilingly appraised his daughter.

Mehmet Ali looked at the girl in frank astonishment at her size and full development; then he said, as he took the oars from the corner of the hut: "And I, who thought that my friend had taken a new wife to himself! Allah, Allah! How fast these youngsters grow! And why do you take her along to the Ghiaour side, to the heathen side, of the river, friend?" he continued talking as he put heavy boots on his feet and measured Fanutza with his eyes as he spoke.

"For everything there is only one right time, say I, Marcu," the chief explained in measured, solemn voice. "And so now is the time for my daughter to get married. I have chosen her a husband from amongst the sons of my men, a husband who will become the chief when I am no longer here to come to your hut at the beginning of every winter. She shall marry him in the spring. I now go with her to the bazaars to buy silks and linens which the women of my tribe will fashion into new clothes for both. And may Allah be good to them."

"Allah il Allah," Mehmet assured Marcu. "And who is he whom you have chosen from amongst your men?"

"I am old, Mehmet, I would otherwise have chosen a younger man for my daughter; but because I fear that this or the following winter will be the last one, I have chosen Stan, whose orphaned daughter is Fanutza's own age. He is good and true and strong. Young men never make careful chiefs."

"That be right and wise," remarked Mehmet, who was by that time ready for the trip. During the whole conversation the young gypsy girl had been looking to her father when he spoke and sidewise when Mehmet answered.

At fourteen Fanutza was a full-grown woman. Her hair, braided in tresses, was hanging from underneath a black fur cap she wore well

over her forehead. Her eyes were large and brown, the long eyebrows were coal black. Her nose was straight and thin and the mouth full and red. Withal she was of a somewhat lighter hue than her father or the rest of the gypsy tribe. Yet there was something of a darker grain that lurked beneath her skin. And she was light on her feet. Even trudging in the deep snow she seemed more to float, to skim on top, than to walk.

Unconcerned she had listened to the conversation that had gone on between her father and the Tartar in the hut of the boatman. She had hardly been interested in the whole affair, yet, when Mehmet Ali mentioned casually as soon as he was outdoors that he knew a man who would pay twenty pieces of gold for such a wife as Fanutza, she became interested in the conversation.

"I sell horses only," Marcu answered quietly.

"Yet my friend and others from his tribe have bought wives. Remember that beautiful Circassian girl?" the Tartar continued, without raising or lowering his voice.

"Yes, Mehmet, we buy wives but we don't sell them."

"Which is not fair," Mehmet reflected aloud, still in the same voice.

By that time they had reached the river shore. Mehmet, after rolling together the oil cloth that had covered the boat, helped the gypsy chief and

his daughter to the stern. With one strong push of the oar on the shore rock, the Tartar slid his boat a hundred feet towards the middle of the stream. Then he seated himself, face towards his passengers, and rowed steadily without saying a single word. The gypsy chief lit his short pipe and looked over his friend's head, trying to distinguish the other shore from behind the curtain of falling snow. The boat glided slowly over the thickening waters of the Danube. A heavy snowstorm, the heaviest of the year, lashed the river. When Mehmet had finally moored his boat to the Rumanian side of the Danube, he turned around to the gypsy chief and said:

"Be back before sundown. It shall be my last crossing of the year. For when the sun rises the waters will be frozen still. The gale blows from the land of the Russians."

"As you tell me, friend," answered Marcu, while helping his daughter out of the boat.

When the two had gone a short distance Fanutza turned her head. Mehmet Ali was leaning on an oar and looking after them. A little later, a hundred paces farther, she caught fragments of a Tartar song that reached her ears in spite of the shrill noises of the wind.

Marcu and his daughter entered the inn that stood a few hundred feet from the shore. The innkeeper, an old, fat, greasy Greek, Chiria Anastasidis, welcomed the gypsy chief. Not know-

ing the relationship between the old man and the girl, he feared to antagonize his customer by talking to the young woman. He pushed a white pine table near the big stove in the middle of the room and after putting two empty glasses on the table he inquired, "White or red?"

"Red wine, Chiria. It warms quicker. I am getting old."

"Old!" exclaimed the Greek, as he brought a small pitcher of wine. "Old! Why, Marcu, you are as young as you were twenty years ago."

"This is my daughter, Fanutza, Chiria, and not my wife."

"A fine daughter you have. Your daughter, eh?"

"Yes, and she is about to marry, too."

After they had clinked glasses and wished one another health and long years the innkeeper inquired:

"All your men healthy?"

"All. Only One-eyed Jancu died. You remember him. He was well along in years."

"*Bagdaproste.* Let not a younger man than he die," answered Anastasidis, as he crossed himself.

After Marcu felt himself warmed back to life by the fine wine he inquired of Anastasidis the price of oats and straw and hay. The innkeeper's store and his warehouse contained everything from a needle to an oxcart. The shelves were

full of dry goods, socks, shirts, silks, belts, fur caps, coats, and trousers. Overhead, hanging from the ceiling, were heavy leather boots, shoes, saddles, harness of all kinds, fishers' nets, and even a red-painted sleigh that swung on heavy chains. In one corner of the store blankets were piled high, while all over the floor were bags of dry beans and peas and corn and oats. At the door were bales of straw and hay, and outside, already half-covered with snow, iron plows hobnobbed with small anchors, harrows, and bundles of scythes that leaned on the wall.

"Oats you wanted? Oats are very high this year, Marcu."

And the bargaining began. Fanutza sat listlessly on her chair and looked through the window. A few minutes later the two men called one another thief and swindler and a hundred other names. Yet each time the bargain was concluded on a certain article they shook hands and repeated that they were the best friends on earth.

"Now that we have finished with the oats, Chiria, let's hear your price for corn? What? Three francs a hundred kilo? No. I call off the bargain on the oats. You are the biggest thief this side of the Danube."

"And you, you lowborn *tzigane,* are the cheapest swindler on earth."

Quarreling and shaking hands alternately

and drinking wine, Marcu and the Greek went on for hours. The gypsy chief had already bought all the food for his men and horses and a few extra blankets and had ordered it all carted to the moored boat where Mehmet Ali was waiting, when Fanutza reminded her father of the silks and linens he wanted to buy.

"I have not forgotten, daughter, I have not forgotten." Fanutza approached the counter behind which the Greek stood ready to serve his customers.

"Show us some silks," she asked.

He emptied a whole shelf on the counter.

The old gypsy stood aside, watching his daughter as she fingered the different pieces of colored silk, which the shopkeeper praised as he himself touched the goods with thumb and forefinger in keen appreciation of the quality he offered. After she had selected all the colors she wanted and picked out the linen and neckerchiefs and ear-rings and tried on a pair of beautiful patent leather boots that reached over the knees and had stripes of red leather sewed on with yellow silk on the soft vamps, Fanutza declared that she had chosen everything she wanted. The bargaining between the Greek and the gypsy was about to start anew when Marcu looked outdoors thoughtfully, stroked his beard and said to the innkeeper:

"Put away the things my daughter has se-

lected. I shall come again, alone, to bargain for them."

"If my friend fears he has not enough money . . ." suavely intervened Anastasidis, as he placed a friendly hand on the gypsy's arm.

"When Marcu has no money he does not ask his women to select silk," haughtily interrupted the gypsy. "It will be as I said it will be. I come alone in a day if the river has frozen. In a day or a week. I come alone."

"Shall I, then, not take all these beautiful things along with me, now?" asked Fanutza in a plaintive reproachful tone. "There is Marcia who waits to see them. I have selected the same silk *basma* for her. Have you not promised me, even this morning . . ."

"A woman must learn to keep her mouth shut," shouted Marcu, as he angrily stamped his right foot on the floor. He looked at his daughter as he had never looked at her before. Only a few hours ago she was his little girl, a child! He was marrying her off so soon to Stan against his desire, although it was the customary age for gypsies, because of his will to see her in good hands and to give to Stan the succession to the leadership of his tribe.

Only a few hours ago! What had brought about the change? Was it in him or in her? That cursed Tartar, Mehmet Ali, with his silly offer of twenty gold-pieces! He, he had done it.

Marcu looked again at his daughter. Her eyelids trembled nervously and there was a little repressed twitch about her mouth. She returned his glance at first, but lowered her eyes under her father's steady gaze. "Already a shameless creature," thought the old gypsy. But he could not bear to think that way about his little daughter, about his Fanutza. He also feared that she could read his thoughts. He was ashamed of what passed through his mind. Rapidly enough in self-defense he turned against her the sharp edge of the argument. Why had she given him all those ugly thoughts?

"It will be as I said, Anastasidis. In a day or a week. When the river has frozen, I come alone. And now, Fanutza, we go. Night is coming close behind us. Come, you shall have all your silks."

The Greek accompanied them to the door. The cart that had brought the merchandise to the boat of the waiting Mehmet was returning.

"The water is thickening," the driver greeted the gypsy and his daughter.

They found Mehmet Ali seated in the boat expecting his passengers.

"Have you bought everything you intended?" the Tartar inquired, as he slid the oars into the hoops.

"Everything," Marcu answered, as he watched his daughter from the corner of an eye.

Vigorously Mehmet Ali rowed till well out into the wide river without saying another word. His manner was so detached that the gypsy chief thought the Tartar had already forgotten what had passed between them in the morning. Sure enough. Why! He was an old man, Mehmet Ali. It was possible he had been commissioned by some Dobrudgean Tartar chief to buy him a wife. He had been refused and now he was no longer thinking about her. He would look somewhere else, where his offer might not be scorned. That offer of Mehmet had upset him. He had never thought Fanutza other than as a child. Of course he was marrying her to Stan . . . but it was more like giving her a second father!

Suddenly the old gypsy looked at the Tartar, who had lifted his oars from the water and brought the boat to an abrupt standstill. Mehmet Ali laid the paddles across the width of the boat and, looking steadily into the eyes of Marcu, he said:

"As I said this morning, Marcu, it is not fair that you should buy wives from us when you like our women and not sell us yours when we like them."

"It is as it is," countered the gypsy savagely.

"But it is not fair," argued Mehmet, slyly watching every movement of his old friend.

"If Mehmet is tired my arms are strong enough to help if he wishes," remarked Marcu.

"No, I am not tired, but I should like my friend to know that I think it is not fair."

There was a long silence during which the boat was carried downstream although it was kept in the middle of the river by skillful little movements of the boatman.

Fanutza looked at the Tartar. He was about the same age as Stan was. Only he was stronger, taller, broader, swifter. When he chanced to look at her his small, bead-like eyes bored through her like gimlets. No man had ever looked at her that way. Stan's eyes were much like her own father's eyes. The Tartar's face was much darker than her own. His nose was flat and his upper lip curled too much noseward and the lower one chinward, and his bulletlike head rose from between the shoulders. There was no neck. No, he was not beautiful to look at. But he was so different from Stan! So different from any of the other men she had seen every day since she was born. Why! Stan . . . Stan was like her father. They were all like him in her tribe!

"And, as I said," Mehmet continued after a while, "as I said, it is not fair. My friend must see that. It is not fair. So I offer you twenty gold pieces for the girl. Is it a bargain?"

"She is not for sale," yelled Marcu, understanding too well the meaning of the oars out of the water.

"No?" wondered Mehmet, "not for twenty

pieces of gold? Well, then I shall offer five more. Sure twenty-five is more than any of your people ever paid to us for a wife. It would shame my ancestors were I to offer more for a gypsy girl than they ever received for one of our women."

"She is not for sale," roared the gypsy at the top of his voice.

By that time the Tartar knew that Marcu was not armed. He knew the chief too well not to know that a knife or a pistol would have been the answer to his second offer and the implied insult to the race of gypsies.

Twenty-five gold pieces! thought Fanutza. Twenty-five gold pieces offered for her by a Tartar at a second bid. She knew what that meant. She had been raised in the noise of continual bargaining between Tartars and gypsies and Greeks. It meant much less than a quarter of the ultimate sum the Tartar was willing to pay. Would Stan ever have offered that for her? No, surely not. She looked at the Tartar and felt the passion that radiated from him. How lukewarm Stan was! And here was a man. Stopped the boat midstream and bargained for her, fought to possess her. Endangered his life for her. For it was a dangerous thing to do what he did and facing her father. Yet . . . she would have to marry Stan because her father bade it.

"I don't mean to offend you," the boatman spoke again, "but you are very slow in deciding whether you accept my bargain or not. Night is closing upon us."

Marcu did not answer immediately. The boat was carried downstream very rapidly. They were at least two miles too far down by now. Mehmet looked at Fanutza and found such lively interest in her eyes that he was encouraged to offer another five gold pieces for her.

It was a proud moment for the girl. So men were willing to pay so much for her! But her heart almost sank when her father pulled out his purse from his pocket and said:

"Mehmet Ali, who is my best friend, has been so good to me these twenty years that I have thought to give him twenty gold pieces that he might buy himself a wife to keep his hut warm during the long winter. What says he to my friendship?"

"That is wonderful! Only now, he is not concerned about that, but about the fairness of his friend who does not want to sell wives to the men whose women he buys. I offer five more gold pieces which makes thirty-five in all. And I do that not for Marcu but for his daughter that she may know that I will not harm her and will forever keep her well fed and buy her silks and jewels."

"Silks!" It occurred to the gypsy chief to look

at his daughter at that moment. She turned her head away from him and looked at the Tartar, from under her brows. How had he known?

"A bargain is a bargain only when two men agree on something, says the Koran," the gypsy chief reminded the Tartar boatman. "I don't want to sell her."

"So we will travel downstream for a while," answered Mehmet Ali and crossed his arms.

After a while the gypsy chief, who had reckoned that they must be fully five miles away from his home across the water, made a new offer.

"A woman, Mehmet Ali, is a woman. They are all alike after you have known them. So I offer you thirty-five pieces of gold with which you can buy for yourself any other woman you please whenever you want."

Fanutza looked at the Tartar. Though it was getting dark she could see the play of every muscle of his face. Hardly had her father finished making his offer, when Mehmet, after one look at the girl, said:

"I offer fifty gold pieces for the girl. Is it a bargain?"

Fanutza's eyes met the eyes of her father. She looked at him entreatingly, "Don't give in to the Tartar," her eyes spoke clearly, and Marcu refused the offer.

"I offer you fifty instead that you buy yourself another woman than my daughter."

"No," answered the Tartar, "but I offer sixty for this one, here."

Quick as a flash Fanutza changed the encouraging glance she had thrown to the passionate man to a pleading look towards her father. "Poor, poor girl!" thought Marcu. "How she fears to lose me! How she fears I might accept the money and sell her to the Tartar!"

"A hundred gold pieces to row us across," he yelled, for the night was closing in upon them and the boat was being carried swiftly downstream. There was danger ahead of them. Marcu knew it.

"A hundred gold pieces is a great sum," mused Mehmet, "a great sum! It has taken twenty years of my life to save such a sum . . . yet, instead of accepting your offer, I will give you the same sum for the woman I want."

"Fool, a woman is only a woman. They are all alike," roared the gypsy.

"Not to me!" answered Mehmet Ali quietly. "I shall not say another word."

"Fool, fool, fool," roared the gypsy, as he still tried to catch Fanutza's eye. It was already too dark.

"Not to me." The Tartar's words echoed in the girl's heart. "Not to me." Twenty years he had worked to save such a great sum. And now he refused an equal amount and was willing to pay it all for her. Would Stan have done that?

Would anybody else have done that? Why should she be compelled to marry whom her father chose when men were willing to pay a hundred gold pieces for her? The old women of the camp had taught her to cook and to mend and to wash and to weave. She must know all that to be worthy of Stan, they had told her. And here was a man who did not know whether she knew any of these things, who staked his life for her and offered a hundred gold pieces in the bargain! Twenty years of savings. Twenty years of work. It was not every day one met such a man. Surely, with one strong push of his arms he could throw her father overboard. He did not do it because he did not want to hurt her feelings. And as the silence continued Fanutza thought her father, too, was a fine man. It was fine of him to offer a hundred gold pieces for her liberty. That was in itself a great thing. But did he do it only for her sake or was it because of Stan, because of himself? And as she thought again of Mehmet's "Not to me," she remembered the fierce bitterness in her father's voice when he had yelled, "All women are alike." That was not true. If it were true why would Mehmet Ali want her and her only after having seen her only once? Then, too, all men must be alike! It was not so at all! Why! Mehmet Ali was not at all like Stan. And he offered a hundred pieces of gold. No. Stan

was of the kind who think all women are alike. That was it. All her people were thinking all women were alike. That was it. Surely all the men in the tribe were alike in that. All her father had ever been to her, his kindness, his love was wiped away when he said those few words. The last few words of Mehmet Ali, "Not to me," were the sweetest music she had ever heard.

Marcu waited until it was dark enough for the Tartar not to see, when, pressing significantly his daughter's foot, he said:

"So be it as you said. Row us across."

"It is not one minute too soon," Mehmet answered. "Only a short distance from here, where the river splits in three forks, is a great rock. Shake hands. Here. Now here is one oar. Pull as I count, *Bir, icki, outch, dort.* Again, *Bir, icki, outch, dort.* Lift your oar. Pull again. Two counts only. *Bir, icki.* So, now we row nearer to the shore. See that light there? Row towards it. Good. Marcu, your arm is still strong and steady and you can drive a good bargain."

Again and again the gypsy pressed the foot of his daughter as he bent over the oar. She should know, of course, that he never intended to keep his end of the bargain. He gave in only when he saw that the Tartar meant to wreck them all on the rocks ahead of them. Why had he, old and experienced as he was, having dealt with

those devils of Tartars for so many years, not known better than to return to the boat after he had heard Mehmet say, "It is not fair!" And after he had reflected on the Tartar's words, why, after he had refused to buy all the silks and linens on that reflection, not a very clear one at first, why had he not told Mehmet to row across alone and deliver the fodder and food. He could have passed the night in Anastasidis's inn and hired another boat the following morning if the river had not frozen meanwhile! He should have known, he who knew these passionate beasts so well. It was all the same with them; whether they set their eyes on a horse that captured their fancy or a woman. They were willing to kill or be killed in the fight for what they wanted. A hundred gold pieces for a woman! Twenty years' work for a woman!

The two men rowed in silence, each one planning how to outwit the other and each one knowing that the other was planning likewise. According to Tartar ethics the bargain was a bargain. When the boat had been pulled out of danger Mehmet hastened to fulfill his end. With one jerk he loosened a heavy belt underneath his coat and pulled out a leather purse which he threw to Marcu. As he did so he met Fanutza's proud eye.

"Here. Count it. Just one hundred."

"That's good enough," the gypsy chief an-

swered, as he put the purse in his pocket without even looking at it. "Row, I am cold. I am anxious to be home."

"It will not be before daylight, chief," remarked Mehmet Ali, as he bent again over his oars and counted aloud, *"Bir, icki, Bir, icki."* An hour later, Fanutza had fallen asleep on the bags of fodder and was covered by the heavy fur coat of the Tartar. The two men rowed the whole night upstream against the current in the slushy heavy waters of the Danube. A hundred times floating pieces of ice had bent back the flat of the oar Marcu was handling, and every time Mehmet had saved it from breaking by a deft stroke of his own oar or by some other similar movement. He was a waterman and knew the ways of the water as well as Marcu himself knew the murky roads of the marshes. The gypsy could not help but admire the powerful quick movements of the Tartar . . . yet . . . to be forced into selling his daughter—that was another thing.

At daylight they were within sight of Mehmet's hut on the shore. The storm had abated. Standing up on the bags of fodder Marcu saw the black smoke that rose from his camp. His people must be waiting on the shore. They were a dozen men. Mehmet was one alone. He would unload the goods first; then, when his men would be near enough, he would tell Fanutza to run to-

wards them. Let Mehmet come to take her if he dared!

A violent jerk woke the gypsy girl from her sleep. She looked at the two men but said nothing. When the boat was moored, the whole tribe of gypsies, who had already mourned their chief yet hoped against hope and watched the length of the shore, surrounded the two men and the woman. There was a noisy welcome. While some of the men helped unload the boat a boy came running with a sleigh cart.

When all the bags were loaded on the sleigh Marcu threw the heavy purse Mehmet had given him to the Tartar's feet and grabbed the arm of his Fanutza.

"Here is your money, Mehmet. I take my daughter."

But before he knew what had happened, Fanutza shook off his grip and picking up the purse she threw it at her father, saying:

"Take it. Give it to Stan so that he can buy with the gold another woman. To him all women are alike. But not to Mehmet Ali. So I shall stay with him. A bargain is a bargain. He staked his life for me."

Marcu knew it was the end. "All women are alike," he whined to Stan, as he handed him the purse. "Take it. All women are alike," he repeated with bitterness, as he made a savage movement towards his daughter.

"All, save those with blood of *Chans* in their veins," said Mehmet Ali, who had put himself between the girl and the whole of her tribe. And the Tartar's words served as a reminder to Marcu that Fanutza's own mother had been a white woman and the daughter of a Tartar chief.

HAZI, WIFE OF SENDER SURTUCK

I CAN still picture to myself Hazi, Sender Surtuck's wife, as I saw her more than twenty years ago. Sender, the Tartar trader, and his new wife had crossed the frozen Danube on an ox-cart laden with barrels of honey. It was his wife's first trip from the marshlands, from the Dobrudja into Rumania. Her husband had taken her along to show her that he was not without friends in the land of the Ghiaours. We, the children of the house, watched her as she descended gracefully from the cart. A heavy veil with eyeholes hung over her face to hide her features from the sight of other men. But after she had entered mother's room she threw her veil over her head and we looked at her while Sender was making his salaams to the master of the house. I still remember thinking that I was happy to be considered a child yet, and therefore privileged to see the Cadima's face. Her hair was thick, black and lustrous. Her eyes were big and of a deep brown water. Her mouth in repose was like a perfectly spanned arch. She was of a smallish build but of perfect proportion, and she walked with a kind of rhythmic glide I

have known in only one woman beside Hazi, Sender Surtuck's wife.

It was late in the afternoon and mother, who had taken a fancy to Hazi, insisted, much to my delight, that Sender and his wife remain in our house overnight. Sender protested at first, saying he had already made arrangements with the *chanjii,* the innkeeper, though even as he protested he helped the man-servant unyoke the big white oxen and asked for a vase in which to draw some honey for the table from one of the barrels standing on its bottom in the cart. Surely Effendi Yanco's wife would permit him to contribute some sweet gold to the evening meal; and he was sure that the *chiujiuks,* the children, would like it. Only he had not meant to intrude. He was still strongly minded to pass the night in the *khan.* He had only wanted to say *Salaam Haleikam* to his old friend Effendi Yanco. Yet if the lady of the house wanted to show such great favor to his *cadima,* how could he refuse! Of a certainty Hazi, who had never before been away from the marshes of Tartar Bazshik, would remember it as a great event to tell to her children, if Allah should think her worthy of his grace, and they in turn would hand on the tale to their children, for it was not every day that Tartars, poor marshland traders, were housed in Effendi Yanco's home.

It was a long-winded speech delivered with

accompanying gestures and salaams, while the honey, as clear as liquid amber, was slowly filling the glass pitcher which had been handed to the guest from Dobrudja.

Afterwards Sender went off with father to the stables. The two had much to tell one another for they were old friends. Hazi was taken into mother's room. It seemed ages before we were called to dinner. Hazi only lifted the lower part of her veil, up to her nose, as she sat down to eat, and she was as much embarrassed as she was amused by forks and spoons and their use. She had never seen such tools before. She clapped her hands noisily when she saw how skillfully her husband used a fork and spoon. She had never known Sender to be such a learned man. Why! he used these tools almost as well as Effendi. They should buy a few of them in the store before they had returned home across the Danube.

Sender thought it well to excuse his wife's exuberance.

"She is young. She has never been outside her home.

"But she is good and healthy. She stands me two hundred ducats in gold! She is the daughter of an Osmanli with blood of Chans in her veins." But mother kissed Hazi and said she would be very happy to have her near her every winter.

"Oh, Sender!" Hazi exclaimed with pleading voice.

"Allah forbids to promise. Promise is Allah's great privilege," spoke Sender soberly. Yet he as good as meant it for a promise and the two women kissed again. They both understood guarded speech. After dinner Sender permitted, nay, asked his wife to dance. As a *bayadere* she had no equal on earth, he assured us as he squatted down on the rug near the fireplace to prepare his pipe. And then Hazi danced to her husband's not very inspiring song. I have since known only one woman, I believe, able to dance as gracefully. Hazi's limbs moved gracefully in harmony with the movement of her torso, which swayed like a young birch tree when the east wind is blowing. While she danced her open palms and long fingers drew intricate arabesques in the smoke-thick air. It was as if her limbs and torso were singing the song of the body. When the dance was finished Hazi flitted with mother from the room; marveling at the novelty of kerosene lamps, delighted by a sound from a piano and almost hysterical when she saw a sewing machine at work.

When Sender had finally joined his wife in the guest room, which was next to my own den, they talked away the greater part of the night. She was telling him about all the things she had seen, and he continually impressed upon her the

fact that it was not given to every Tartar to have such a friend as the Effendi Yanco, who owned such marvels, and that it was to him that she chiefly owed the great honor shown her.

"And Sender, you must buy me tools to eat with. They shall all marvel at home!"

"I shall buy you tools to eat with and should I sell my honey I'll buy a candle giving ten times more light than a wax candle, yet it is not a candle, it burns with the aid of a certain heavy smelling water called 'kurusin.'" Sender Surtuck loved his wife, Hazi, and to please her was even ready to buy things made by the Ghiaours.

I could not sleep. I could have murdered the Tartar for the happiness that was his. The love that was his. For the beautiful *bayadere* that was his—lying so close to him, talking while he snored heavily. He was a happy man——

Yet, a few months later, on an evening of the spring of the same year, Sender Surtuck killed Hazi with his own hands; drove his short knife into her heart as she kneeled before him with arms raised above her head so that he might the more easily strike the blow. The story of her death was told to me by Kezhman Ali, the old *chiaoush* and *chalfan,* who was both priest and banker to the people of Tartar Bazshik.

"And the Koran says, 'Life without love is like love without life.' It is death, my son. So you need no longer wonder why Sender Surtuck

married Hazi, so young and so beautiful, after he had counted in his life more than fifty times twelve new moons. Sender Surtuck was healthy and strong and therefore he paid the two hundred ducats Hazi's father demanded for his daughter. It was wise of Sender; for love giveth to life new lease and with each new love man renews his youth. Hale men want to live, therefore they love and seek new love when the old dieth. And it is wise that it happens so and the Koran ordains that it be so. That is why we Mussulmans have more white-bearded youths than the Ghiaours have. This is why we are young to the grave. Consider, my son. After the wedding Sender and Hazi crossed the Danube and on coming home brought from the other side silks and woolen cloth and eating tools as used by *Effendis,* and a water-burning candle that gives great light, making night into day. And I, as the *chiaoush,* forbade the use of the water-burning candle because it changes the order of life. It is written that day shall be day and night shall be night. That the sun gives light for the day.

"Sender was in his hut most of the winter. He had no trading to do. The bees were hibernating. There was plenty of honey left, and quarters of lambs, and *kummis* a-plenty. And as the last married man, Sender was entitled to all the titbits of freshly killed animals; brains and kid-

neys and tongues. Indeed, it was a winter of pleasure for Sender Surtuck. Food a-plenty, a warm hut and a young wife who was also a *bayadere,* dancing before him every day at eventide. What more could a man want? So Sender Surtuck was happy. But was she happy? No, my son, not always. Not as much as she desired. For youth craves youth for companionship. Youth wants changes. It is why we have four seasons. Old age would be satisfied with only one long season. When youth walks there is a movement from the foot to the ankle, from the ankle to the knee, and from the knee to the hip. But see an old man walk! Oh! my son; from the hips move his limbs. Youth! And Sender would not let his wife from his eyes. She should have been playing with the young maidens of the tribe. There was Fatma and Rozi and Stepna and Yahde who danced and made merry and laughed and sang while weaving cloth and spinning wool. And their laughter echoed around Hazi's hut. But Sender would not let her go be merry among the girls; for, with them were young men. The maidens were all unveiled and showed their faces to the men, and their bare legs as they danced. And when the maidens were alone there was talk about young men; praise of youth and strength and repeated talk of love. Hazi longed to dance before other eyes than Sender's, therefore her own eyes took

on the haze of eyes of men traveling the seas.

"She looked past Sender's head when she danced; looked through the walls, and her ears trained themselves to hear the footsteps of the young men going to the maidens' quarters. She had seen them on only rare occasions. But she knew when broad-shouldered Kennal passed by the hut. She knew when Osman sauntered by and when Kergez stole up to Fatma's sleeping quarters. So she began to beg of Sender to let her go to the maidens to weave cloth for her husband. Her fingers longed to weave cloth, she assured him. And the kind she could weave no other woman ever wove. For her mother had been the best weaver. And the cloth made for the *bournouz* and pantaloons of her father and brothers was the finest grained cloth the faithful ever wore. And by these entreaties she obtained Sender's will to let her do as she pleased. But before she had gone Sender spoke to her as follows:

" 'I do let you go among the maidens and young men. Only remember the law of Kurguzes, my tribe: "A woman who has dishonored her husband's house is killed by him and her body is thrown to the wolves." '

" 'It is the same with the Osmanlis,' she answered. 'And it is four hundred years since a woman of my tribe has so been punished. How long is it since one of yours was so punished?'

Sender did not answer and Hazi's pride in her tribe rose. And so Hazi went forth to weave cloth. There was no evil thought in her mind. There came no evil thoughts in the minds of the young men as they watched her dance; for truly, they were Kurguzes, each of them. Even though she was the best *bayadere* they had ever seen, the men feasted their eyes on her beautiful movements, considering Sender a happy man to have her, but were grateful to him for letting her be amongst them and were not envious of him.

"And amongst the young men was one Nazim, the son of Mechmet Ali. Nazim's mother had counted twenty times twelve moons since she had given him birth. A shy, quiet boy was Nazim. Tall and heavy and clumsy he was. His hair was dull and his eyes had no glint in them. He never sang when the other young men sang and when he spoke his words were like a scant horde in retreat before an enemy and not like the words of the others.

"The Kurguzes are all smooth-tongued, being traders. Their words are like hordes marching in triumph, close one to the other and swinging in long lines. And tellers of tales they are, and singers and dancers. And the maidens and youth all mocked Nazim. And there was not one of the girls, the poorest of them, not even the One-eyed Ape, that would have thought of marrying Nazim. Not for a hundred ducats would

her father have sold her to him for a wife. They thought him a fool, dull, and stupid; with no will, no mind, no fire. They mocked and insulted him. Yet he never rose in anger, he just smiled sheepishly. Though he was as strong as an ox, when at work, he offered no more resistance than a lamb when tussled by the young men in play. And one day, when they had mocked Nazim overmuch, Hazi spoke to the youths:

" 'Why do you mock him? Because he is not loud-mouthed? Because he is strong and would not use his strength to hurt you? It seems to me that if I were to have to choose to-day amongst you men, I should choose no other man than Nazim. And I am an Osmanli. The men of my tribe are strong and brave in battle, but gentle with their friends and kin.'

"Nazim heard what she said and when he made sure that she did not say it in mockery, he looked at her. Something stirred in him and the fire leaped to his eyes and stayed there. A few days later there was much singing in the weaving hut. The white cloth for the old Hagii was finished. And after Hazi had danced the youths began to sing. And there was one voice that rose higher than the other voices. Higher and rounder and warmer. And that voice was Nazim's. So Fatma looked at the youth and saw for the first time what a beautiful mouth he had. And then she looked at Hazi and saw that

Nazim sang to her. And every one wondered why Nazim had never sung before.

"Still a few days later there was a dance in which the young men danced with the maidens. Fatma danced with Nazim and felt the warm glow of his body and the hot flush of his cheek as his feet moved smoothly and swiftly. She spoke to him as they danced and his words flowed slowly but steadily in answer. And there was wisdom, tempered by beauty of speech. After the dance there was wrestling. Nazim's strength showed itself. He used only half of it to best the strongest youths.

"So they began to ask one another: 'What has happened with Nazim?' For lo! in less than a moon his dull hair was as shiny as anyone's. His eyes had a glint, his cheeks color, his mouth freshness and his voice was so beautiful and strong! He was still shy. But it was the shyness of strength; the shyness of a man afraid to use his strength lest it kill. And with the steady flow of words also came a steady gait in his lower limbs. And his arms no longer hung limply at his sides when he spoke to people. And the maidens vied with each other to please him, but he had eyes only for Hazi. He took her home evenings to Sender's hut and even came to call for her and went with her to the youths' quarters. Sender doubted nothing. Why should he? For would it not be beneath him to suspect a

woman of the Osmanlis? And was it not known that Nazim was only half-witted? The news of the change in the boy had not yet reached the older people.

"And as Nazim walked near Hazi his mind unfolded as unfolds a flower in warm rain after a dry spell. Truly, it was as if she were a second mother, the one giving birth to his soul. The first one had given the shell of the boy from her flesh: and now, that other one was filling the shell with all that was beautiful within her. Or better still, it was like a master potter taking over an ill-shaped vase of soft clay and fashioning it anew. And Hazi took great pleasure in what she was doing. For Allah had given her a clear mind and a good heart. She did not know what was slowly coming into her blood, what was echoing in it. She did not know that she herself was growing more beautiful and wiser as she gave wisdom and beauty. For wisdom is like a water spring; the more you draw from it, the clearer it runs.

"The maidens' eyes opened to Nazim's awakening; they vied with each other to please him. And Fatma, who had mocked the boy more frequently than any other of the girls, was now the one employing all her arts to captivate him. And all the other youths were now as nothing compared to Nazim. For, was he not stronger and more beautiful and wiser than all of them! And did

not his voice rise like the waves when the tide comes in?

"Nazim loved Hazi. But with a different love from that which Fatma awakened in his breast. For he was a Kurguz and could not even think of helping a woman to dishonor her husband's house. And so one day when he was walking with Hazi he told her. 'I love Fatma. Yesternight I took the moon as witness that I am to marry her. She loves me, Fatma, she loves me.'

"Listening to his words, Hazi's feet grew heavy. Her chest began to heave and her head to swim. Her arms ached and her limbs pained and her mouth suddenly became like a chimney through which flames were rising to the heavens. She gave a cry and fainted. She herself had not known before what she felt for the boy. It was only when he had told her that he was to marry another woman that she realized the love that was in her heart. Yet it did not come clearly to her. It did not happen in the guise of sin. She only felt like one who had prepared the best food, had served it to the table, and was forbidden to eat it—yet had to watch the others eat.

"For three days and three nights she was unconscious. And her husband sitting at her bedside could not string together the words she said while in high fever. The *hojea* was called. He gave her drinks of boiled herbs and roots.

But they helped not. Then, early on the fourth day Nazim entered the hut. Sender allowed him to go to her bedside even while her face was uncovered. For he thought nothing of Nazim. It was as if Nazim were not a man at all. He was so childish. It was the first time Nazim had seen Hazi's face. Pale and feverish as it was, it was more beautiful than Fatma's. And by that time he also understood why Sender's wife had swooned. But Nazim was a Kurguz. She was another man's wife.

"'Hazi,' the boy spoke, as he sat down near the bed, 'I, Nazim, have come to see you.' Hazi opened her eyes and looked at him. Then understanding came to her and she smiled as she said:

"'It is well you did. I waited for you. I should have died if you had not come. But now, I shall be well again. And when you marry Fatma I shall dance my best, if it so please you.'

It was only then that Sender heard about Nazim's promise to Fatma and he wondered that so beautiful a girl should want to marry so stupid a boy. Yet very soon he, too, like the others, learned about Nazim's wonderful unfolding. Every one spoke about the miracle. It was as clear as day that the prophet had kissed the boy's brow in his sleep.

"Hazi ceased to weave cloth and kept to her hut. When pain and longing overcame her she prayed and fasted and begged Allah to take her

to himself. When Sender was not in the hut she cried and sobbed and called out Nazim's name aloud. 'Nazim, my Nazim.'

"After awhile news came to Hazi that the wedding between Fatma and Nazim was set for the second moon after the snow should have been melted and drunk by the soil. At times she rushed out to the door of the hut and made to go to meet Nazim and tell him that it could not be. But the teaching of her mother, of her faith, forbade her feet to go farther. She was Sender's wife. She then felt remorse, and because of that she overwhelmed Sender with greater love and gave him more frequent caresses: to drown her passion for the one she loved in the flesh of him for whom she had no love. Yet every time she did so she rose in the morning with a feeling of having committed a greater sin than adultery. For she sinned doubly. Sinned in her mind, and in her flesh. The caresses she gave her husband were meant for Nazim.

"The snow began to melt, the days lengthened. The howls of the wolves became more distant every night. The ice on the river melted and the birds began to flit in the naked trees for worms and grub between the folds of the bark.

"Neither was Nazim happy. His wisdom had brought too much sadness in his life. He knew why Hazi never went anywhere and he longed to see her. And he, too, prayed and cried. But he

was a Kurguz. Another man's wife is another man's wife, and a promise is a promise. 'For it is better not to save a man from death than to break a promise to a faithful one,' says the Koran.

"Then, one evening, when Sender had again gone away to sell his honey, Hazi waited for Nazim to come out from the maidens' quarter. She wanted only to see him. But when she saw him she could no longer hold out against her love and throwing her arms around his neck she cried:

" 'Nazim, come, let us run away to the land of the Ghiaours where we could be happy.'

"Nazim drew his head from the noose of her coiled arms and spoke gently but firmly even while his great body shook with fear lest his passion be stronger than his faith.

" 'It could not be, Hazi. You are another man's wife.'

"But she would not hear of it. Fidelity, faith, teaching, training, had been melted by love as snow is melted by the sun. She had him come to her hut, and there, in the dark, she threw her arms again around the boy's neck and kissed him; burned his cheeks with her hot lips. 'Nazim,' she cried, 'you must be mine.' But Nazim was a Kurguz.

" 'You are another man's wife,' he said, as he pinned her arms to her sides: 'Allah has given me wisdom to use for his praise and not to dis-

honor my kin. And if Allah has willed that I suffer because of that, it is Allah's will and not mine that I must follow.'

"'Allah! Allah!' Hazi answered. 'Nazim! Nazim! Have I brought luster to your hair that another woman should play with it? Have I brought fire into your eyes that another woman should feast on them? Have I tuned the chords of your voice for another woman to hear? Have I brought warmth to your limbs that another woman should feel their touch? And whatever other women now love in you, it is I that have given it, and I call it mine. And wisdom has come to me that Allah himself thinks it sinful to give caresses to other than the one you love. And I love you, Nazim. Let go of my arms that I may touch you.

"'I have promised Fatma.'

"'Never, never will you be Fatma's man. Nazim, never. It is me you love, not Fatma. It is sinful to marry her. I shall not live to see you marry her. And you shall not marry her after my death.'

"Till late in the night the two sat together and talked, but when Nazim left the hut his faith had been stronger than her love and his own passion. He went to his hut with her last words ringing in his ears. 'Nazim you shall never wed Fatma while I am alive. And you will not wed her after my death. For my love to you is stronger than

my faith and my life and the oath I swore to my husband and the teaching of my mother.'

"The snow melted rapidly. The women were now ready with Fatma's wedding dresses. The maidens were merrier than ever. Their quarters were gay from sunrise to late in the night. The bees began to stir in the combs, and the mares dropped their colts, the ewes their lambs, and frogs were heard croaking in the pools.

"Two more weeks to the wedding of Fatma to Nazim. One more week to the wedding of Fatma to Nazim. Two more days. The *hoja* has been brought from Cerna Voda. The horses are being trained for the races and stunts. The women watch Fatma day and night. They teach her what the prophet has ordained a bride must know. She must sit for hours and untie complicated knots and disentangle thread without breaking it. She is taught patience and submission; the two great virtues of a wife, next to fidelity. She is taught to smile and laugh when in pain. She is taught to listen without answering. For it is no little thing to be a wife! To be both useful and sweet. To be like milk: to nourish even when curdled by time and warmth.

"The day of the wedding Hazi sought out Nazim and spoke to him again:

" 'Nazim,' she said, 'I cannot bear the thought of giving you away to another woman. I cannot bear the thought of another woman's bare

arms around your neck, of another woman's lips on the lips to which I have given life. Those thoughts are like dull knives cutting my flesh underneath the skin. Nazim, there is still time. The anger of Sender, the hatred of the whole tribe, the shame of Fatma, even the blasphemy of the *hoja* and death are nothing to me. Come, let us run away. And if the men overtake us we shall both die, if Allah so wills. But I cannot bear the thought of your being another woman's husband, and I can no longer be Sender's wife. With you rests my life or my death. Speak!"

"For a long while he looked at her (she had thrown her veil overhead), saw that her cheeks were sunken and pale, that her eyes were red from much crying and little sleep; that her arms had lost their roundness, and her fingers no longer kept together, but twitched and coiled one over the other as twitches and curls flesh over open fire. And his own heart battled against his mind; against the wisdom she had given him and which she now asked him to betray. Then tears came to his eyes as he said:

" 'It cannot be, Hazi. It cannot be. I am to wed Fatma to-night.'

" 'You will not!' she cried, beating his chest with her two fists. He let her do as she pleased. He would have let her drive knives through his heart if she so wanted. All of a sudden she

ceased. She became quiet and cold, looked at him for a while, then she begged:

" 'Kiss me. Oh Nazim! Kiss me on my mouth only once. The first and the last time. The last time lips shall ever touch mine. Kiss me, Nazim.'

"He ran away without turning his head. A woman is a woman. Faith and teaching are nothing to a woman when she loves. Love is her faith. But Nazim was a Kurguz, a man.

"The night of the wedding. The earth was dry and warm. There was a large circle of small fires around which sat the maidens and the youths. Within the circle, in the center, sat the white bearded *hoja,* in new white vestments, and around him the people of the tribe. The men on one side and the women on the other. To the right of the holy man sat Nazim and to the left Fatma, dressed in silks. A white veil pinned to her hair was ready to be thrown over her face. After the evening prayers, I, as the *chiaoush,* read the marriage contract. Six horses and four hundred ducats in gold Nazim's father has asked to be written in as price to Fatma's father for a wife to his son.

"After I was through reading the *hoja* stood up and said so that everybody should hear:

" 'Is there anybody here who should not be here? Whose heart is full of anger, whose mind harbors evil thoughts? Speak. Thrice shall I

ask the same thing before pronouncing Nazim and Fatma man and wife. Before taking the moon as witness. The moon and the stars, the children of the prophets. Is there anybody here who should not be here?'

"'I,' shouted Hazi, 'for I have dishonored my husband's house and I am ready to pay for the sin with my life.'

"Even the fire ceased cracking when the *hoja* sat down and covered his eyes with his hands. The others did likewise. Hazi rose from her place and walked slowly to her hut followed by Sender Surtuck. We held our breath until we heard a loud scream from there. May Allah be merciful to her soul.

"And then we turned around.

Nazim was dead. He died without a sound, slain by Fatma's swift hand.

"Hazi was still alive. So before dying Hazi told the truth to her husband and to the *hoja;* that she wanted to die that her death be a bar to Nazim's wedding.

"So if you ever meet Sender Surtuck, for he is wandering aimlessly from place to place, talk kindly to him, my son. Don't look upon him as a murderer. For though Hazi had never sinned in the flesh, her sin was still a very great one. May Allah be kind to her soul, and forgive that her love was more to her than her life, which was

his, Allah's, the only one, and Mahomet's, who is his only prophet.

"And ever since that night young lambs are born dead, the cattle grow lame, and mothers' breasts are dry. And there is no joy in our tribe. There is no song in our youths. And the men are slow at trading.

"And if a trader be dumb his horse is lame, but if the trader be smooth of tongue the lame horse is clean of limbs and the blind horse sees. And there must be joy in selling if it be to bring profit. But selling what is yours to buy food with gives no joy, and therefore the speech is slow. . . . It is like showing the speed of a horse with reins checked short. Consider, my son. If you ever meet Sender Surtuck. . . ."

And Kezhman Ali, the *chiaoush* and *chalfan,* the priest and banker of Tartar Bazhik, wept.

THE BEAR-TAMER'S DAUGHTER

Costa, the bear-tamer, was well known all along the Carpathian Mountains; on the Hungarian side of the chain of mountains as well as on the Rumanian side. Of the hundreds of gypsies, roving to and fro between the villages, dancing their bears before inns and on the market-places, more than half bought their bears from Costa.

A bear tamed by Costa was worth a fortune. It could dance on all fours and waltz on its hind legs to the sound of a tambourine or the music of a flute, it turned somersaults, could stand on its head, roll a log or an empty barrel, stand at attention and do a thousand other cute things to amuse children and grown-ups.

And Costa was continually inventing new tricks for his bears. He could teach them anything he wanted. Once in Costa's hands a bear was not let go until it was an accomplished artist and could be relied upon to do the bidding of its master.

Costa had his establishment in a gully deep down between two mountains. In the winter, the cold Carpathian winter, in large holes he had dug

out in the mountainsides, and from early spring to late in the fall in small tents that were pitched between the tall sun-hungry trees, Costa lived with his daughter Margarita.

In a cranny at the foot of the mountain was the school. There, Costa, all alone, surrounded only by huge brown bears, man-eating beasts caught only yesterday, plied his trade.

It was Costa's custom to leave his gully early every spring as soon as the snow began to melt, to go in search of bears. With a large loaf of black bread and a piece of cheese in a carpet-bag, a bottle of whisky in the long upper of one of his boots, a sharp knife in the other, a well-oiled army revolver in his wide red belt, a rope, a few short chains, the links of which he had himself forged during the long winter months, the pointed black fur cap 'way down over his bushy brows, Costa was off among the mountains in search of bears.

Sometimes, when in luck, he returned the same day or the same night dragging at the end of the rope a huge she-bear not yet completely awakened from her winter sleep, and a little cub or two, hind paws tied to hind paws, slung on his shoulders. At other times Costa was away for days and weeks.

He never came home empty-handed and, indeed, it was a bad week when the heavily bearded,

tall black-eyed gypsy did not sell at least one fresh bearskin to some inn-keeper.

But Costa was not much interested in killing bears. He needed them alive. He knew every inch of the Carpathian Mountains and knew every bear hole. He had a thousand different tricks for catching a bear alive.

If there were no tracks about the bear's winter home Costa would empty half his flask of whisky in an earthen dish and place it at one of the two exit-places a she-bear generally makes before going to hibernate. Then he would gather a few sticks, set them on fire, sprinkle them with sulphur, place them near the other exit and withdraw to observe developments.

If the bear was beginning to awaken from her long sleep the smoke and the odor of sulphur would have its effect. The beast would soon come upon the bowl filled with alcohol, turn around it, smell it, taste it and finish by lapping it dry.

A while later Costa would creep in on all fours, knife between his teeth, pistol in one hand and ready rope-noose in the other. If his calculations had not gone amiss, if the whisky had been of the right kind, Costa was soon dragging a bear behind the rope.

But that was only one of a thousand ways of catching a bear alive. The real manner was determined according to conditions, whims and in-

stinct. After catching a dozen bears or so, the schooling would begin. No matter how a freshly caught bear tugged at the chain when any one approached it, when Costa came near the beast it would cringe and whine. In a week at the most the fiercest bear was tamed.

He would take the beast to the *cainny,* to the "private school," as he called the fissure in the mountains, and in a day or two Master Bruin was glad to do any trick demanded of him if only he had not to face again the man who had caught him.

Such was Costa. But once a bear was tamed he lost all interest in the animal, hated him, spat at him when he passed the tree to which the beast was chained. And during the long winter nights he would tell stories to the pipe-smoking peasants at the inn, stories of other days, when bears were really fierce beasts, when it took weeks of cunning to get them and months to tame them and when every bear-dancer caught and tamed his own bear, when the bears in the Carpathians were bears and men were men and not as they are now, when bears are tame kittens and men are old women.

And it so happened that none of Costa's own sons was worthy of his father. They could teach fine enough tricks to the bears after they were tamed by the old man; they could drive a good bargain with another gypsy coming to buy a

bear; but they did not have the nose, could not scent a bear's hole and never dared what their father dared. In time they all left their father and settled each in a separate gully to ply his trade of bear-tamer.

Costa would have despaired of life altogether because of his offspring had it not been for his only daughter, whom he had by one of his wives, a clean-limbed almost wild woman, half Tartar and half Cherkez. He had bought her from a horse-selling gypsy chief and she had died when her daughter was yet very young. And that daughter of his, Margarita, with the straight clean limbs of her mother and the sharp, angular, almost Egyptian features of her father, was Costa's pride.

She was too young to go a-hunting like her father, or accompany him, but she could tame a mature bear almost as quickly and thoroughly as he could. She had started with the cubs her father brought when she was not yet eight years old. When she was ten, cubs, grown to be bears on a chain in the gully, were disgustingly easy for her, and even some of the beasts her father brought dragging at the end of a rope were unworthy of her attention, unless they were of the proper kind, fierce and full of fight.

Then, oh then, life held some charms!

"Come, Margarita," her father would call to her. "This looks like a real one."

Bare-legged, disheveled, the gypsy girl would face the animal, cowhide whip in her bare brown arm, and try him. And if he showed fight she danced for joy, she hugged and kissed her father, tore at his mustache and bit hair from his beard.

"*Tatuca, tatuca,* it's a real one this time!"

And for days and days, from early morning to late at night, it mattered not whether a dozen wild-eyed buyers clamored to see the chief, or it snowed, or brother fought brother with knives and whips, father and daughter remained with the real one in the private school.

They emerged only when the work was done. Thinner, with eyes sparkling, arms and legs scarred and with pride in work accomplished, father or daughter would call to one of the would-be buyers:

"Take him out and give him some water. He will eat out of your hands."

And he would. The sight of any two-legged animal was enough to drive fear into any graduate from the private school of Costa and his daughter.

Then the father would say to Margarita:

"That was yours." Or, "It was mine."

No compliments were exchanged. There was no contradiction on that score. Instinctively each

of them knew by whom and when, at what stroke of the whip, the thing was accomplished.

When Margarita was fourteen years old it so happened that her father's catches that spring had been only *mortaciunas,* dead ones, kittens. It was a pity to waste cowhide on them. The winter had been a very long one after a very wet fall and the bears were so weak from prolonged hibernation and hunger that they looked more like sheep than man-eating beasts.

Margarita had hoped every day for a "real live one." But no. *Mortaciunas* they were, every one of them. While her father was away she stalked, whip in hand, from one bear to the other, teased them, hit them, now gave them pieces of raw meat to awaken their taste for blood, lassoed the playful cubs from their mothers to stir their savagery, but to no avail.

Occasionally some female would shoot out a paw and give a tug at the chain, one end of which was dangling from a ring pierced through the nose. Margarita's hopes would rise and she would scream her joy in a dozen endearing names, yet a second application of the whip would hardly stir the bear from its place.

And when the spring came to a close and the wild bears left the gullies and valleys and climbed the tops of the mountains for sheep, deer and wild goat, father and daughter had no excitement. The taming done and most of the bears

sold, Costa went a-browsing from inn to inn, from village to village, drinking, carousing, playing cards and fighting with other gypsies, sometimes on the Rumanian side of the mountains and at other times on the Hungarian side, working up some excitement for himself by outwitting the frontier guards posted on either side of the Carpathians.

He returned home once in a while to inquire how things went; if any of the bears needed private schooling. But if such a state had come to pass Margarita had already attended to it and there was nothing more to be done.

Margarita was far from being satisfied. She could have picked quarrels with her brothers, who came occasionally to visit her, or with the husbands of her half-sisters, but they were all "old women," well-fed, satisfied traders. Nor was there any fun in quarreling with the *tziganes* who came to buy tamed bears. She threw insults to their teeth.

"Why don't you hunt for your own bears? You only want tame bears because you are tame men yourselves. You are tame men yourselves."

They did not answer her. They told her she had pretty eyes and beautiful teeth, that her arms were round and brown. Some playfully inquired how she would like it if they would buy her from her father. But that was all.

"Sell me to you? Sell me to you? Sell a tiger

to a lamb? I would tear you to pieces. No, I would not. I would just spit at you. Like that, *na, ptui.*"

"Well, no, I would not buy you. I would not take you for a gift," she was answered.

"Of course you would not. You are afraid. I dare you. You are afraid. You buy tame bears. This one here, I tamed him. You could eat from one plate with him now. Or better buy this one here. He was born tame. As you were. His father was a lamb as yours was. That's the kind you want. You buy them tamed. Even your women you buy tamed. Why don't you hunt for them? You are afraid. You buy them at the end of a rope. Tied, cowed."

She teased, she dared. In vain. Men looked at her from the corner of an eye but avoided her and no one ever inquired seriously of her father whether she was for sale or not.

One early morning, the time of the year when leaves were fluttering in the brumal air, when frost, the shadow of winter, sits on the fox grapes and plums, Petrackio, the son of Ursu, the bear-tamer, entered the gully where lived Costa and his daughter.

Ursu, the bear-tamer, was an old competitor of Costa's. His establishment was twenty miles from there. The two bear-tamers were deadly enemies and it was known that if the two should

ever meet alone in the mountains, but one would return. That Ursu's son, Petrackio, should venture to Costa's gully was the height of audacity. What brought him there was the fact that his father had been away for more than two weeks and no one had seen him.

Sure that Costa had killed him, the boy came to avenge his father. Petrackio and Margarita had never seen each other. The young gypsy prowled about the camp for a little while without perceiving any one. It was Sunday. Suddenly Margarita came out of the tent, and yawned as she stretched her arms high over her head.

"Hey, you!" he called to her. "Is your father dead or is he hibernating already?"

"No," she answered; "he is milking the goat for babies who have lost themselves in the mountains."

As she spoke she came nearer to the young gypsy and looked him straight in the eye. His was a new face. The boy stood straight, with feet well apart, neck bent forward, and lips drawn away from the teeth. Margarita was thrilled. It was a "live one," one that should fight the whole summer. She had longed for a bear who would not tame easily and she almost ran for her whip after one good look at the boy, who squared himself before her. She had never be-

fore seen a face that promised more fight, more sport, than that now before her.

"And who are you?" he asked the girl as he returned her fierce glances.

"I am Costa's daughter," she answered, without moving an inch.

"And who are you? Have you come to buy a tame bear, a very tame bear?" she mocked, "one who dances as soon as you say *'martino,'* like this, like that?"

"I want none of your puppets. When I want a bear I go and get him in his lair with my bare hands," the youth answered.

Then after a while he continued, narrowing his eyes as he spoke:

"So you are Margarita, Costa's daughter! So you are Margarita! So—so! The daughter of that Cherkez woman. So—so! Well, I am Petrackio, Ursu's son. And I have come for revenge. Where is your father?"

Margarita knew well what the trouble was. She also knew that her father had been away to the Dobrudja more than a month and had returned only the night before. She could have said so and assured Petrackio. Instead of that she laughed loudly, tossing her head this way and that, then hissing between her teeth, with neck stretching out toward the boy:

"Why don't you wait another twenty years, when my father will be lame and blind, and fight

him! Why, Ursu's son, that was between old men. If you want to fight, why not fight me?"

"You, a girl?"

It drew fire. In a flash Margarita was in her tent and back. She held her whip in one hand when she returned. Her body was as taut as a steel spring.

"So, that's what you think of me? Not good enough to fight with? I will show you who I am."

Chained to a stout tree, not far from where they were, a huge brown she-bear was standing on its haunches and grunting. Before Petrackio had known what had happened Margarita, with one tug at the chain, had torn the ring from the nose of the bear. Bellowing from the depths of its lungs, the bleeding animal charged ahead, kicking, pawing, shaking its head viciously back and forth as it charged the girl whose only weapon was the cowhide whip in her hand.

When the bear was near enough she let the whip fall upon its head again and again. Her arm worked like a piston rod. The bear repeated its charge yet the girl gave no ground, but kept on whipping the beast over the head until it reeled and retreated to seek shelter behind its tree.

"Will you fight me now?" Margarita asked, turning savagely on the boy who had not moved from his place.

"No," he answered. "I won't fight a woman."

"It is because you are afraid. You want to fight an old man."

"Afraid, I? Have you never heard of Petrackio? I will fight a dozen of your brothers. The whole tribe of your men."

"We have no men, only old women; fight me if you dare. Here, I begin," and Margarita brought her whip across the boy's face.

It was as if a thousand bees had suddenly stung the boy. It was as if a swiftly turning wheel had been set on fire. Before Margarita had had time to know what happened her whip had been jerked loose from her hand and she was thrown face downward in the dirt. Petrackio's knee was between her shoulders, holding her down as one holds a squirming, wriggling, stinging snake.

Margarita felt the cold steel blade as it touched the back of her neck and thought the last breath was near.

"Snake! I will not kill you. I don't kill women. I want your father to know that I have been here. You shall tell him. And lest you forget I shall take your tresses as a reminder."

When Margarita rose from the ground she felt the cold wind on her bare neck. Petrackio had cut off her tresses and was already on his horse galloping homeward at full gallop. She looked after him and screamed. She shook her fists and

stamped her feet and devised a thousand tortures for him and his father as soon as she should capture them. That very night she and her father were to pounce upon them in their gully and drag them to the cranny, to the private school, and teach them to dance. Ah! He would pay dearly for that. She would chain him herself, pass a ring through his upper lip, as she did to bears, and teach him tricks.

And afterward—ah, afterward—he would know who Margarita was. She ran to her tent, looked at herself in the silver-handled mirror her father had once given her, and screamed again. He had cut off her hair! The coward! Better he had killed her!

How could she ever show herself now? She would have to stay in her hut the whole Winter; avoid being seen by any one. Oh, why had he not killed her? He would pay for that. Oh, he would pay! She stampeded the dogs and grazing horses and in her excitement tore through the camp like a whirlwind.

Presently, only too eager to start the journey of revenge, she blew the horn to call her father. But when she saw him descending the nearest mountain she went into the tent, and, covering her head with a colored shawl, a *basma,* she pretended to Costa that she had called him because she was so wretched. She did not mention Petrackio's visit.

"What's the *basma* on your head?" Costa asked.

"Washed my hair, *tatuca.*"

"What do you want, Margarita? Why have you called me? Here, what is the matter with that bear there? Bleeding, I see, and loose too. By all the devils! Margarita, what have you been up to?"

"Oh, leave him. He is like a kitten again. Leave him, father. Why don't you ever get real ones again? When spring comes I go with you hunting."

"But what has happened to the bear, Margarita? Has he thrown you? Did you call me because you were afraid now that the beast is loose? Speak, you she-devil."

"Afraid! I? Here!"

And she went close to the bear.

"But then why have you called me suddenly?"

"Oh, because I want you to take me to the village."

"So, so; well, that's different! Let's close up this *martino* until we come back, and let us go. Saddle my horse, Margarita, while you saddle yours." As he spoke Costa roped the bear and dragged it to a fissure in the mountain for which a revolving rock served as a door.

"That's women. They are all alike when the time comes. Their feet burn. They want to

go and come. She, too, like the rest," muttered Costa as he finished his job.

Father and daughter were not loquacious. Seclusion breeds silence. Margarita rode on her small horse, following at a few paces from her father's mount. As she rode on she thought of him, of Petrackio. Of course he was a real one. But was she herself a real one? How he had knocked the whip from her hand and thrown her to the ground! It had come with such suddenness and force that she did not know how it had been done.

But she still felt the grip of his fingers on her arm, the hardness of his knee between her shoulders and the quick hot breath as he spoke to her while she was at his mercy.

"Snake! I don't kill women. I want your father to know that I have been here."

That was bravery. She would fight him, him alone. She would tame him. But not like that, not as one tames a bear. That was not the way. He was a man.

By the time they had reached the marketplace of the village Margarita had reconstructed the whole episode of the morning a hundred times and had judged carefully his actions and hers. She had very little to reproach herself with. She had acted as she should. And he? He . . . No. He should have killed her. No. No. That would not have been the right thing. To cut off

her hair, to provoke her father by the insult, was greater bravery.

By the time they had tethered their horses to the trees in front of the inn Margarita had weighed him carefully in her mind and decided that he was a real one.

Not a word to her father. She would take care of all that herself. All alone. Costa had a grudge to settle with Ursu. That was all his affair. The grudge between herself and Petrackio was a separate thing.

"Whoa, look who is here!" several peasants called out loudly at Costa's appearance at the inn. Come in, come in. *Fata mare,* come in and let us look at your eyes," said the innkeeper, being seconded by the *popa,* the priest of the village.

"Still training cubs, girl, *fata mare?*" Popa Yancu asked, trying to pinch Margarita's arm.

"Cubs!" called out Costa. "Cubs! She is taming the wildest quite as well as I can." And, growing suddenly very proud of his daughter: "Better, even better, I say. She may sit among men at the inn and everywhere. Sit near me, Margarita, here. Bring wine, the oldest, Calin, you swindling innkeeper, and set glasses, big glasses, Hungarian fashion, for each of us, including my daughter." And turning to Margarita, he said: "And if you want music, I will send a messenger to bring Yancu Lautauru, or any

one you like best to hear. No? As you wish it to be."

"Ursu has gone by, an hour ago," said the innkeeper Calin as he filled the glasses.

"And why do you tell me that?" broke out Costa in a rage. "Have I ever inquired about him, what?"

"No, Costa, but he was bitten by a snake while he was in the mountains. He had to cut off one of his toes—he may lose his right foot—it swells so rapidly and he is lame, maybe forever," said the innkeeper.

"Is that so? Tell us more. What do you know about it?" the peasants asked, curious for further information.

"That's all I know. I sold him some pure brandy. It's good to have it near oneself before the end comes," the innkeeper added. "He looks old and worn, and is bent like a twig after a hailstorm."

"Well, that's different, Calin, that's different," Costa muttered as he sat down again and began to bite off the ends of his long beard as he always did when he had to suppress great rage. "And do you say he will remain lame for life, Calin?"

"Looks that way to me."

Father's and daughter's eyes met. Margarita knew how he hated Ursu. He looked at her and she understood. He was being cheated of his re-

venge. He could not fight a lame man. He did not know what her look said. He was blinded by his own rage against men and bears and life itself. Life was becoming too tame an affair. Men were tame. Bears were tame. No fights. No wolves. No robbers. No women were stolen. Ursu had been the only man and now he was lame.

"Has a fine lad for a son, Ursu has," the *popa* said as he looked at Margarita and winked to the rest of the assemblage. "He is a better hunter than his father."

"That's not very much," said Costa.

They all laughed at the sally and punched the gypsy in the ribs.

"Well, no, it's not so at all," explained the *popa*. "He is as strong a boy as there is within fifty miles of here. Quiet and strong, and good too. And he can tame a bear as well as anybody. I ought to know!"

It was only on rare occasions that the *popa* thus revealed the fact that he was himself the son of a bear-tamer. It was plain that the *popa* favored Petrackio.

"Well, be that as it may," said Costa, "but I bet a gold-piece that Margarita could throw him."

"No, no, no," many voices rose at once.

"I bet a hundred gold-pieces."

"You might as well bet a thousand!" the *popa*

exclaimed. "I know the boy too well. He won't wrestle with a girl."

"But I tell you that she can throw any man," Costa argued as the wine began to have its effect. He was a bad drinker and was becoming boisterous and quarrelsome after a few drinks.

"Well, Calin, it's all your fault. Giving news about some one at least one of the party is not interested in," said an old peasant as he made ready to leave the table.

"That's so. Miron is right," seconded Costa as he rose from his chair. "Here I come ready to drink and have some music, talk with friends and please my daughter when he finds nothing else to tell me but that Ursu had gone by. Here, take your money from this gold-piece. Come, daughter. Good night, men."

And Costa stalked out of the inn before anybody else had left.

Margarita rode silently near her father. Like a flock of golden sheep the rays of the sun broke and scattered themselves on the cold, silver mountain peaks. From time to time an awkward movement of some animal disturbed some stone or bowlder which rolled down the mountainside, filling the valley with sharp echoes that died in dull, hollow thuds as they ended in the valleys.

Suddenly Costa began to sob. He cried easily after a glass of wine. It was his weakest spot. And as he cried it seemed as if all the mountains

cried with him, felt his sorrow and wept with him. Margarita, awakened from her own dreams, sped her horse.

"Why have you waited twenty years?" she reproached her father, knowing the reason for his sorrow. "If I had a grudge to settle I would not wait that long. The same day, the same day, or a day later at most."

"Oh, a bad year! A bad year," moaned Costa. "Without a wife! Bears tame as kittens and Ursu lame, lame, lame? Oh! Oh! It's a bad year, a bad year, daughter."

"You don't even catch a live one now," the daughter reproached him again. "Is it because you are getting old? Or are bears and men all tame now? You cry like a woman. Listen, the mountain cries too. Shame!"

"I old? I old? You are crazy. The bears were tame last year. Too long a winter. Too long. Without a wife, and Ursu lame," and the old man sobbed again. "Let the mountains cry with me. They understand, they understand."

It was pitch dark by the time they had reached their gully, and Costa stretched himself on the straw-pile as soon as he let the flap of his tent fall back again.

Margarita stabled, watered and fed the horses before she thought again of herself. She touched her neck and felt again with her fingers the place where her heavy tresses had been cut off.

She thought of him and cursed him for the insult.

Yet although it seemed to her that she still felt the grip of his steel-like fingers on her flesh she had no desire to free herself, no desire to shake off the illusion of a sharp knee that pressed down her shoulders; and between a thousand curses and tears of rage she saw Petrackio's sharp features, the eyes set well apart, the small ears set back firmly, the mouth and nose and forehead bespeaking courage and decision.

Margarita could not sleep. As she reviewed again what had happened in the morning she regretted that she had not used the whip on Petrackio more than she had done. It would have been much better, she thought. He should know that Costa's daughter was not a plaything. He would have gone home and found his father had returned. Petrackio would have come to see her. It would have been well for him to know that Costa's daughter was not to be trifled with. She should have used the whip more rapidly. It might have saved her long tresses.

She tried to place in her memory the exact instant the boy had knocked the whip out of her hand and thrown her to the ground. She was doubtlessly in his power then, absolutely in his power. He could have done what he pleased with her—he could have killed her.

As she sat on the ground in front of her tent

she suddenly heard the beat of a horse's hoofs at a distance. Margarita listened and when she was sure the rider came toward the gully she entered her tent. The hoof-beats soon ceased. A dog barked. After that she heard a sharp, long, penetrating whistle. Margarita's ears, accustomed to catch the sounds, soon knew that the birds in the surrounding chestnut-trees were scenting danger. The flight of a chipmunk told her that the intruder was within sight of the camp.

Again the dog barked; just one short yelp and no more. Some one had thrown him a piece of raw meat. She had heard the flop of it as it fell to the ground. Then some one whistled softly from very near. Margarita could hardly contain herself for joy.

It was Petrackio. He was a real one and she was taming him! It was the old sensation of taming live bears with a thousand new thrills added. She forgot all about the loss of her tresses. What did they matter when weighed against such pleasure?

Something in her urged her to rush out to the man and talk to him. But something stronger held her back, gave promise of greater pleasure if she but sat quiet and watched the taming. It was like drinking good wine in small gulps to prolong the pleasure, to satiate oneself with the exquisite taste.

She heard the whistling again and again and

every time she heard the shrill sounds she thought it the sweetest music. Not the loudest howl from the fiercest bear she had ever tamed could compare with that. He, Petrackio, was a real one, and she was taming him. And not with a cowhide whip. Not with red-hot coals and a piece of sheet iron on which the bear was compelled to dance. No, no, with another weapon, an invisible weapon, a sharper and more potent one.

She would have screamed for joy but she controlled herself. Silence added to the sting of the weapon. More than that. It was the weapon.

Daylight was coming in through rents in the canvas of the tent. The few last screeches of a preying owl, then the clicking of wild pheasants proclaimed that the sun was peeping over the mountain tops, like a red-faced boy over a high garden fence. He, Petrackio, was calling her. He was calling her. But she would not answer.

There was a last appeal in an "Oho, oho!" coming from behind her tent, then there was silence for a while. After that, and before there were too many sounds in the valley, Margarita heard the hoof-beats of a departing horse. Tired, feverish, she fell asleep.

"Ho, ho, ho!" She awoke suddenly, hearing her father's voice outside her tent. "The sun has gone to Hungary and you are still sleeping! Was the wine too strong for you? What?"

"Yes, no, yes, no, *tatuca.* Let me sleep. I want to sleep. My head aches."

"That comes from washing your hair too often," the father answered before leaving. After that he muttered to himself, "When the time comes, they are all like that."

She heard her father approach her tent several times before nightfall but she made believe that she was fast asleep. He left some food near her cot. But, as in the days when they had a real one to tame, she felt no hunger, only a horrible thirst. An hour after sunset, Margarita was listening for the hoof-beats. She heard none.

Her pain was now sharper than yesterday's joy. She waited and listened until midnight. Not a sound. She went out of her tent and looked at the sky. Her whip, the weapon in which she had had so much confidence all the years, was at her feet. She scorned it now. It was a weapon as crude as a child's plaything.

After she had waited and listened for many weary hours she whistled loud and long. The sound reverberated, thrown from one mountain wall to the other and back, until it died in some distant gully. It was like the call of some wild animal.

She waited silently. There was no answer to her call. But when she lifted the flap of her tent at daybreak she found the two braided tresses lying across the cot. Startled, shocked, mad,

speechless, Margarita took one of the tresses in each hand and rushed out again. Nobody to be seen. The dog was peacefully licking his chops. Wild-eyed, the girl looked around her. Seized by an uncontrollable rage, she went for her whip and began to lash the dog with its thongs.

"So, ha, ha, you will let thieves go and come as they please, will you, will you, ha? Take this and take that."

"Why do you hit the dog?" asked Costa, coming out of his tent, awakened by the animal's howls.

"Why? Why? Because, look, look! Look at my hair. Some one has entered my tent and sheared them off while I was asleep. And he did not move, did not bark, nothing."

"What? What is that?" Costa screamed. "Who did that? Who did that? If I did not know that Ursu was lame, by fire and water! Margarita—my poor girl—my poor girl—who could have done it? I will go to the end of the world to find him."

"A thief, a coward, a triple coward, one who dared not fight me in daylight," screamed Margarita at the top of her voice, knowing that Petrackio could not be too far off to hear her words.

Costa was soon on his horse.

"I shall not return before finding the thief, the coward," was all he said before riding away.

Costa was hardly out of sight when Petrackio

showed himself, emerging from behind a tree only a few paces behind the girl.

"Well, I heard you calling me a while ago, so I arrived astride an eagle and dropped your tresses on your cot through the air-hole on top of your tent. Why have you called me?"

"Called you? I called you?"

"I heard your whistle!"

"That was for the dog."

"Be it as you say," Petrackio grinned. "Well then, I may go, Costa's daughter. I gave you back what I took from you." He turned to leave her. "I was sorry, afraid that your father might beat you."

"Did I ask my hair back from you? No. I did not."

"I thought you might want it back," he said banteringly, without looking at the girl, "and, as I happened to pass this way I just dropped it in the tent."

"You lie; you came on purpose," answered Margarita.

She felt a sudden pang as she saw the deep gash her whip had cut in the boy's face. They looked each other over. The glint of his eyes gripped her eyes even more strongly than his steely fingers had gripped her a day before. The sound of a galloping horse was coming nearer and nearer. Her father was returning. She

looked at Petrackio. He too had heard the hoof-beats yet there was no trace of fear on his face.

Margarita watched the boy's face while she measured the nearing sound of the hoof-beats. Her father must have entered the mouth of the gully. Petrackio knew that as well as she, yet he did not move a foot. He looked at her steadily. When she had heard her father's voice talking to the horse and seen that the boy had made no move to leave, to hide between the trees, she called to him, trembling with fear:

"Hide, for God's sake, hide. He comes."

"I will wait for you on Sunday at the inn," Petrackio said quietly before vanishing behind a tree.

And as the bear-tamer's daughter passed by the tree to which a bear was chained she felt that she herself was as a bear that had been tamed, or a trainer that had been tamed by a real live bear, tamed to do the master's will, yet she was already unhappy, thinking of the long days and long nights between then and Sunday.

YANCU LAUTARU

THE Marinescus were Moldavian Boyars, their lands stretched from near the Bratesh lake,—where the Prut river, separating Rumania from Bessarabia, merges with the Danube,—to the city of Falcui; inland it goes as far as the Seret river, on which lumber is sent down on log rafts from the forests of Bucovina to be loaded for export on sea-going boats at anchor in the port of Galatz or Braila.

One-eighth of Moldavia was owned by the Marinescus. They claimed descent from Stefan Voevod, "Cel Mare," The Great One, who had repeatedly defeated the Turkish hosts in battle and won Rumania's political independence.

On the Prut river the Marinescus owned a magnificent castle which in grandeur and beauty of style had no equal in the whole country. And besides the *curte,* the court, of the Boyar, there were numerous smaller castles in which lived the near and distant relatives of the reigning head. Each head of a Marinescu family was in charge of part of the land. Some were in charge of the grain-crops, other of the forests and saw-

mills. Some of the Marinescus were in charge of the cattle-raising business of the house, and others took care of the thousands of sheep which grazed along the river from early spring to late in the fall. There were thousands of acres of sugar beets, and large fisheries to be taken care of. The wealth of one of the family was the wealth of all. It was enough to say of one that he was a Marinescu to convey that he had behind him the total wealth of one-eighth of Moldavia. And the honor of one, even the remotest relative, as long as his name was Marinescu, was the honor of all of them and was jealously guarded.

When a woman of the family married outside the circle of her first and second cousins, she was given a large dowry in gold, her share of the common fortune; but the land was kept intact in perpetuity to the males of the name. As soon as the crops were harvested, the cattle stabled, and the sheep gathered in the Stinas for winter quarters, the Marinescus departed from their country homes. Some went to Paris, where they owned palaces on the Boulevard St. Germain, where they were addressed as Prince and Princess, and had Salons where the most famous men of arts and letters were entertained. Others went to Florence, to Venice, and in later years, around the '90's, some members of the family, finally reconciled to the Hohenzollern court reigning in Rumania, wintered in Bucharest. The

Marinescus were the last of the Boyars to forgive the removal of the seat of the country from Jassy to the city upon the Dimbovitza river.

To the chief of the family (direct descendant of Stefan Voevod), living in the great castle, each member owed a strict account of his behavior. The Boyar of the castle was the one who approved or disapproved of intended marriages, political aspirations, and the careers of the sons of the different houses. The one who dared choose without his approval was cast out by him without appeal and without recourse. The decision of the great Boyar was irrevocable. "You are no longer a Marinescu," that formula ended all relationship, put an end to incomes and deprived a man of all property save what he was wearing on his back. Such occurrences had been very few and widely separated; only three in the four centuries of the Marinescu dominion, but they formed the background for dozens of legends, legends of passionate love between a Boyar's son and a gypsy girl, or a Boyar's daughter and some gypsy fiddler at home or abroad.

Gypsies had been the bane of the family. Indeed no gypsy tribe was allowed to camp on Marinescu ground. Still, amongst the gypsies roving in Moldavia, whenever a young maiden had refused more than one young wooer, thinking them beneath her, people said, sneering, that she was waiting for a Marinescu to steal her.

The name Marinescu occurred so frequently in the talk of the gypsies that one would have thought that for centuries and centuries the sons and daughters of the open road had intermarried regularly with the scions of the Boyars of the great castle. The slightest tinge of white blood made a Marinescu out of a gypsy. In the eyes of the gypsies the Marinescu's was the only white blood in the country. Sometimes it was hurled as a reproach, an infamy, and at other times it was considered ennobling, as giving the possessor rights to special consideration, to special care when ill, and to priority when a leader was to be chosen. "A man who has a drop of Marinescu blood in him can be depended on in times of stress," was what every gypsy used to say when the old leader failed him or died childless, leaving his succession open.

Stefan Marinescu was taken to Paris by his mother when he was not yet twenty. He was the only son of the Boyar of the great castle. That he had not been taken to the great city before was mainly due to his father's frequent illnesses, which kept the old cripple at his country home. Stefan was a powerfully built youth with big dark eyes and long black hair. Tall, broad-shouldered, with arms that swung when he walked and feet that planted themselves firmly on the ground in long rhythmic strides, Stefan gave the impression of a young Hercules. His

voice was round and bell-like when he spoke, and his slightest wish, though voiced with utmost respect, was equivalent to an order.

Lautaru, one of the greatest gypsy violinists of Rumania, had taught him to play the violin. Though Yancu was a very busy man, he made the trip every week from Galatz on the Danube to the Boyar's house on the Prut river, more than fifty miles, in a carriage sent specially for him and which brought him home two days later. And just before Stefan had gone to Paris with his mother, Yancu Lautaru had begged an audience with the great Boyar and told him that he had taught the young Boyar all he knew and that Conitzu Stefan could indeed play the violin better than he, Yancu Lautaru, the best *lautar* in Rumania, were he to live a hundred years more. And the old gypsy begged the Boyar to call for his son other teachers, greater ones, from the land of the Franks, because a player like Boyar Stefan was as rare as roses in the snow. In his mother's salon, on the Boulevard St. Germain, the young Rumanian became easily the center of every gathering. Whenever he had gone out visiting with the Princess, his mother, the young Moldavian Prince was hedged in by the enamored eyes of the young countesses and baronesses of the wealthiest and oldest families of France. He was the social lion of that season. The best musicians of France, even

those who had kept aloof from the salons, had begged for invitations whenever and wherever it was known that the Prince was to come. After hearing him play the violin they rushed to their friends and told wonderful tales of golden sound that flowed from the big Moldavian's bow, of unearthly harmonies that rose from the strings and dissolved into ethereal voices which haunted the soul and defied the memory. His tone was as big and wide and deep as he chose it to be, and the most difficult passages were tossed off with ease and grandeur.

There were no such things as technical difficulties for Stefan Marinescu. And he could change from the saddest melody, from one in which the stars, the heavens, and the seas seemed to complain of their eternity, to a tripping dance of breathless speed, in which the mountains, the fields, and men and beast mingled in the joy of life . . . of life when the spring-sap rises in the trees and makes the blood course rapidly, of life when the fruits fall, the wind blows, and the yellow leaves flutter in the air.

The mother, a Marinescu herself, a second cousin, married early to the reigning head of the family, was so happy because her son was lionized that she wrote long letters about it to her sick husband, who made a great effort and joined them in Paris at the end of the winter season.

Stefan wrote to his teacher, to Yancu Lau-

taru, that he wished he were with him. "The week is empty without you," he wrote.

Nicolai Marinescu, the Boyar, was anxious to be near his son. There had been another Stefan Marinescu in the family, a century ago, and the story had it that that Stefan, too, had played the violin with marvelous skill. But he ended by being cast out from the castle by his father because of a love affair with the daughter of an Italian painter. Marinescu had come to Paris more to watch against a possible mesalliance, than to enjoy the enthusiastic receptions given to his son in the salons of the nobles.

But the young man seemed to care very little for even the most beautiful young ladies he met. He smiled at them and talked to them, but the most enticing could not warm in him the desire even of meeting them again.

Stefan had very little in common with his father. He respected him but without knowing whether he loved him or not. But the young Boyar was very intimate with his mother. When she had praised the beauty of one of the young ladies and intimated a possible engagement, he answered frankly, "But, Mamutza, her voice is so harsh! Her voice is empty, cracked. Mamutza, the woman I could love must have a voice I could hear with pleasure. Don't insist. I will find the one with the voice I should like. I can hear her voice already."

Thus the first Parisian season ended. In the spring Stefan returned with his mother to his father's castle. Yancu Lautaru was called by Stefan as soon as he arrived, and the old gypsy again spent long hours with the young Boyar. The few months' absence had drawn the two nearer to each other. The old man had aged considerably in those few months. When they were not playing together they went walking in the fields or boating on the river. The young man told his old teacher all he knew about the wonders of the great city, promising to take him there in the near future. And the old man questioned the boy and wanted to hear what the Franks had said about Stefan's playing. The Franks were good judges. One of his relatives had taken Paris by storm a few years before and married a rich princess whose wealth in gold and lands equaled that of a king's and whose beauty was famed all over the world.

For months the two were together every week, but when the first snow flurry had descended about the grounds of the castle, the Marinescus, the whole household, were off again to Paris. Stefan had obtained permission to take Yancu Lautaru with him, and the old gypsy's company made the week's journey a happy one.

At first Nicolai Marinescu, the father, had no objection to Yancu Lautaru's friendship for his son. He liked the old man. In their youth—

they were of the same age—they had played together. Yancu Lautaru had played at his wedding and entertained him during long weeks of illness. But when he saw his son preferring the companionship of the gypsy to all other people he became worried over Stefan's future. All the European culture Nicolai Marinescu had absorbed in his travels and sojourns in the great capitals of the old world had not extinguished a paganistic superstition, a belief in witchcraft as practiced by the *tziganes,* the gypsies. It was said of them that they communicated with spirits and had the assistance of Beelzebub himself whenever they were ready to pay the price the dark monarch demanded. That other Stefan Marinescu of a century before had been bewitched by a woman with the help of an old gypsy. The sorceress was seen with the young woman standing naked in the open field, at midnight, invoking the moon. And the peasants had sworn that they had heard a flute-like voice answering the young woman's prayers. "He will love your eyes if you give me your soul every Monday of the new moon. He will love your lips if you give me the Thursdays." And when she had accepted, the flute-like voice was heard to laugh shrilly. In the morning the cows were dry and the ewes had lost their lambs.

At some other new moon night she was again seen standing naked in the fields, and when the

peasants had gathered at a distance, with bells and dishpans and had crossed themselves and invoked the name of the Eternal to drive away the dark one, they were pelted with stones which the river spat at them and they had to run to their huts. The whole night long the stones kept up their drumming against the walls of the houses and barns.

The missiles broke the windows, entered the chimneys and put out the fires; and the wicks of the candles were snuffed out by an unseen hand. Until the cock crew the shrill laughter of Beelzebub was heard. In the morning all the cows were dry, the oxen wild, the horses lame, the fowls dead. The mothers' breasts were empty, the children withered. And no sooner had the sun risen than clouds of locusts came between its light and the earth and not one kernel of wheat was left when the sun had set. Nicolai Marinescu had heard the story of the great calamity many a time in his youth. Not until that other Stefan had left his home and gone with the woman (said the tale) was the land free from the evils of witchcraft. And not until the old gypsy was burned alive in her hut where she practiced sorcery had any of the peasants dared to plow or sow their land.

All these legends had come back to the old Boyar's mind since he had observed his son's attachment to the old gypsy. No power but witch-

craft caused this. It was high time to curb the evil. So Yancu Lautaru did not know why he found himself packed off to the railroad station early one morning, before the young Boyar had risen from his bed. The old Boyar was leaning on his cane and his hands trembled as he handed the gypsy a heavy purse full with gold and begged him, with eyes full of tears, to return him his son . . . the son who was already in the clutches of dark powers . . . whose violin spoke the language of fire and water . . . that was it . . . fire and water. No human being had made the violin speak such language. And Yancu Lautaru returned to his home white-haired and broken-hearted, and no coaxing and no amount of money, however large, could induce him to play at the weddings of that winter.

"But where is Yancu?" the young Boyar asked, as soon as he had dressed, the morning the gypsy had been sent away.

No one knew how to answer him. His mother sent him to his father with the query.

"Don't ask, son," the old man answered, shaking with emotion. "It has been my will that he return whence he came, and my will is that you shall never see him again."

Stefan knew his father too well to question further, but the walls of the palace looked like prison walls to him when he saw them again. They were closing in all about him. It seemed to

him that everything had died overnight. That death had entered his own being. He went to see his mother. She was pale and her eyes were extinguished. He tried to play the violin; the instrument responded as if it were a piece of lead. The sound withered on the strings and died on the bow. And all the voices of the people around him were like echoes of croaking crows.

That night, at the salon of the Countess Bernes, Stefan was asked to play. His mother had brought his violin in the carriage and it was put into the young Boyar's hands by the countess herself.

"But I can't play, Madame," the young Boyar explained as he showed her the violin, "don't you see? My violin is dead! It died this morning. It's dead, don't you see?"

"A savage whim of a barbarian," thought the countess.

Stefan could find no rest. At times he felt too hot and at others his feet were frozen. The father watched his son's behavior. "Yancu was good and true. Already Beelzebub was freeing his possession. Stefan has refused to play . . ." the old superstitious Boyar muttered to himself.

When the Marinescus returned to their home Stefan was feverish and had to be put to bed. The house physician was called and remained near the sick young man the whole night.

"My violin died," the fevered young man repeated incessantly, "my violin died. Yancu Lautaru took its soul with him. Yancu . . . Yancu. . . ."

"Typhus," the medicus diagnosed to the crying mother early on the morning of the third day.

He could not understand why the old Boyar seemed rather pleased with his son's illness. The refined old Frenchman could not fathom the soul of the old savage who rubbed his hands in glee while his son tossed on the bed hovering between life and death.

"Typhus, you say, doctor? You don't know . . . science does not know, doctor. I can tell you what it is. I know. My son is battling with Beelzebub. He has been bewitched by an old gypsy. And he is being freed from the dark power. See, see, how he is fighting," and the old Boyar called to his son to throw out the devil, to strangle him, to choke him; himself continually calling on God to aid Stefan.

Six long weeks Stefan had lain abed; at times, at the beginning, completely unconscious, and later with a beclouded memory of things and people. But at the first sight of his father all came back and he averted his eyes. He seemed to see the scene in which the old white-haired gypsy was ordered to leave immediately, and he hated his father.

"But, God! It's my own son, my own flesh

and blood! Why does he close his eyes when I enter the room?" the old man complained to the crying mother. "Ask him, ask him," the mother answered with tears. Her son's illness had worn her to a shadow.

The physician felt that something had happened between father and son before the young man had been taken ill. He advised the old Boyar to avoid going into the sick room until Stefan had completely recovered.

When spring had returned the father had to make the journey back to his homeland, and mother and son were left alone.

When Stefan's health was restored sufficiently he and his mother were seen in Nice, along the Riviera, and after that in Venice and Florence and Rome. Just when they were intending to go to Cairo for the fall season news reached them of the sudden death of the old Boyar. The death of Nicolai Marinescu made the young Stefan head of the old castle and chief of the family.

He returned and took possession. Soon after that the snow ushered in an early winter. Stefan's mother urged him to return to Paris but the young Boyar would not hear of it. His mother could go if she wanted. He would remain at home. There were different things he wanted to supervise. Hardly had his mother left the castle and Stefan ordered the best horses

harnessed to the lightest carriage. He himself took the reins in hand. He wanted no one with him.

"Where does the Boyar drive at such speed?" the peasants asked one another. The old house-servants, wise with long service, shook their heads knowingly and answered, "Nobody ever knows what a Marinescu Boyar will do next. He may be off to some woman. And again, he may just want to drive the two horses to death. Who knows?"

Stefan took the road to Galatz, to the home of Yancu Lautaru. The impulse was irresistible.

He had traveled the same road once in his youth, when Yancu had been reported very ill. His mother had given him permission to go and had made him promise not to tell his father, who was then absent. All the intervening years had left the memory of that ride clear and concise in the youth's mind. And as he drove against the cold wind it seemed to him that he heard again the voice of a little girl, a round-eyed, curly-headed little girl, a year or two younger than himself, who stood at the bedside of the old gypsy. And it became clear to him now that it was that marvelous voice that had been the diapason, the tuning-fork, by which he had tried all the voices he had ever heard.

He had forgotten all about the girl. An illness had wiped her from his memory. But now,

against the wind, on the wings of the wind coming from the direction of his goal, he seemed to hear it all over again.

She was Yancu's niece. And what if she was a gypsy? She had the true voice. The voice that had haunted him since early youth. He would choose whom he wanted. For centuries and centuries the Marinescus had been slaves to the past. Not one had been allowed to follow the bent of his own heart. The poor, the peasants, the villagers were happier than the Marinescus of the great castles and the great fertile fields and heavy wooded forests. They, the peasants, could choose freely. Not so the Marinescus. It was good that fate had given him the power to dictate now. His orders were that every one of the Marinescus should follow his own heart in matters of love. He himself . . . if that curly-headed girl of the marvelous voice were still alive, he himself would set an example. He would bring her to the castle. Make her the mistress of the castle—what did he care for traditions!

He would take Yancu Lautaru to the castle. He wanted to hear him play—hear him every day. If a *tzigane* was as good a player, if he had such a heart as Yancu, who gave away more than he earned, what mattered it that he was a *tzigane?*

The horses had been running at full speed for two hours and had covered only half the distance.

A heavy snow was falling, making traveling difficult. Stefan gave the horses a short rest by walking them slowly. But when their flanks no longer heaved like bellows the young Boyar cracked the long whip over their heads and urged them on. He must see Yancu Lautaru. He was his only friend. He had to hear that girl's voice again.

"Go on, go on, my good ones! A Marinescu is driving you," Stefan spoke to the horses. "The wind is against you but the wind is good. My children and children's children will bless the wind."

The horses understood. The young Boyar had always been good and kind to them. If he asked an effort now it was because he knew. They got their second wind. The good beasts stretched their necks and lengthened their stride.

It was getting dark. They were approaching the Bratesh lake, behind the Vadu Ungurului, the woods of which were thick with wolves as soon as the first snow of the year fell. One of the horses rose suddenly on its hind legs and tossed its head to shake off the bit. The whip of the master brought it down. A little while later the other horse stopped abruptly and sniffed the air. It resumed its course only after Stefan had fired several shots in the air. The young Boyar did not see the lurking beasts. Yet he was sure they were there, all about him, behind

the trees, right and left on the road. By the action of the horses he knew the nearness of the man-eating wolves. There was a dim light at a short distance. Probably the hut of a peasant. He could drive to it and stay there overnight. But a mad desire to see Yancu Lautaru and hear that girl's voice urged him past the hut though the road led again through the woods. The horses reared again and again and the cracks of the whip alternated with the loud reports from the pistol which Stefan discharged in the trees as he sped by. When night had finally fallen, two foaming horses coursed madly through the city, dragging after them a badly broken carriage in which sat a white-faced youth with feverish eyes.

"Show me the way to Yancu Lautaru," the young Boyar asked of a passer-by.

"The house at the end of the street, young man, and if you want to speak to him, you'd better hurry."

"Here you! Take care of the horses while I run to see him," said Stefan as he put the reins in the man's hands and jumped down from the carriage.

"But who are you?" demanded the man as he looked into Stefan's face in the light of the dim street-lantern. "You look like the ghost of Yancu Lautaru—Yancu Lautaru at twenty! as if it were yesterday. Yancu Lautaru in the flesh

at twenty. . . ." And as he said so the man dropped the reins, crossed himself and ran in the opposite direction, invoking aloud heaven and the holy virgin to protect him from the powers of darkness in that bewitched night.

"So, you have come, my young Boyar," said the old gypsy from his bed, when he heard Stefan's voice. "I knew you would—I knew you would—*bogdaproste*. . . ."

"He was calling you all the time," said a curly-headed gypsy girl who cried as she prepared the wax candles for the dead.

It was the voice—the true diapason, the tuning-fork.

"Give me your hand. I want to touch your face . . . my son . . . my . . . my . . . only son. I knew you were my son . . . at the first stroke of the bow . . . my son . . . my son . . . who . . . plays better . . . than any man. . . ." And Yancu Lautaru died peacefully.

Thus it came to pass that because the two horses were eaten by wolves as they ran homewards through the forest, the Marinescus mourned the lost head of the family, while Stefan Lautaru took the fiddle of his father and departed to other lands where he gathered fame and gold which he shared with his curly-headed, clear-voiced gypsy wife.